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The Jews of France

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The Jewish Quarterly Review.

APRIL, 1891.

THE JEWS OF FRANCE.

To give a tolerably exact idea of Judaism in France at the present day, of its tendencies, of its religious system, and of its charities, it is not necessary to go back to any very distant date. The history of the organisation of its religious system, as well as of its institutions, is entirely contained in the years following the civil emancipation of the Jews in France, more especially in the period nearest to the present day.

There were, as is well known, many Jews in France before the great revolution of 1789. They were tolerated, though they had to pay dearly for the air they breathed. They were treated as foreigners, and the authorities paid no attention to them or their religion except to molest the former and to fetter the free exercise of the latter. The Jewish inhabitants of every town formed a separate community, which had its own administration, unconnected with any other, and recognising no authority but its own.

On the morrow of the revolution, or rather, on the memorable days, the 28th of January, 1790 and the 27th of September, 1791, days which gave the French Jews the rights and duties of citizens, they were at last able to practise their religion and its ritual in the full light of day, and to give them all the publicity and splendour which they considered necessary.

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It is, however, a mistake to suppose that the State immediately took the religion of its Jewish subjects under its protection, and placed it at once in the position to which the principles of equality would have entitled it. While other religions were recognised and supported by the State, Judaism continued to be self-administered as before. Each community followed its local habits and customs, without any connection with the Government, without any officially recognised status. This legal inferiority, in which Judaism, much to its detriment, continued to exist, was specially astonishing at a time when the great proclamation of the revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity—still re-echoed in every heart. It can be partly explained by the religious indifference affected by the State authorities, an indifference which made them consider the formal recognition of a new, or rather of a hitherto unrecognised, religion as unworthy of the new ideas of the age. The Republican Government was indeed constantly endeavouring to break the few remaining ties that still existed between it and religious systems in general; naturally, therefore, it saw no necessity for entering on a new connection with Judaism, and the general opinion was that enough had been done in giving full liberty of conscience to the followers of that religion. The moderation, or perhaps the timidity of the Jews themselves, who hardly ventured to claim full equality all along the line on the very day of their emancipation, may also partly explain this state of things. They were thankful to have found a country where they could claim the protection of the laws as a right, and no doubt thought that having received so much, they could not dream of demanding more.

It was Napoleon I. who conceived the idea of organising the Jewish religion on a legal basis, of making room for it side by side with other creeds, of placing corporate bodies and hierarchical religious functionaries at its head, of determining by law how these bodies and functionaries were to be appointed, and of defining their rights and their duties.

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What motive induced the Emperor to devote so much attention to the organisation of Judaism, to the introduction of order and hierarchy into its system? In the first place, we must remember that the Emperor had entered upon a course of religious reaction, because in common with all thinking men, he saw in religion a strong element of power and authority. As a politician, he took care to remember this fact, and to make these elements of power and authority useful to the State by subjecting them to his control and to his immediate legislation. It is moreover well known that this great genius had a passion for order and discipline. After having reorganised Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, the former by means of the "Concordat," the latter by a special code of laws, he felt desirous of endowing Judaism with an equally complete and modern organisation.

As a result of these characteristic tendencies, he summoned all the most distinguished Jews of the empire to meet on July 15th, 1806, and the discussions and declarations of this general assembly greatly assisted in dispelling the prejudices that ignorance had so long maintained. Napoleon I. being thus re-assured with regard to the opinions of the Jews in general, the morality of their religious doctrines, and their social principles, took the further step (February 9th, 1807) of assembling the famous Synhedrin, whose mission it was to sanction these discussions and declarations. Finally he published a decree (March 17th, 1808) regulating the various institutions of Judaism, which was immediately to become law in every Jewish community throughout his empire. The history of French Judaism, and the successive transformations through which it has reached its present form, may be said to date from this epoch. The decree in question has, it is true, passed through many modifications of detail, but its general outline is unchanged, and still regulates Judaism in France.

It is a noteworthy circumstance that three non-Jewish commissioners were appointed by the Government to be

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present at all the meetings of the assembly, summoned to discuss and reorganise the religious, moral and social doctrines of Judaism. These commissioners were to direct the debates, to ask questions, to prorogue the meetings, and it is possible that the presence and influence of these representatives of the Emperor strongly affected certain important points, those for instance concerning the Rabbinical hierarchy, which are foreign to the spirit of Judaism and recall the organisation of Roman Catholicism.

In order to avoid confusion and the constant mingling of administrative, religious, ritual, and philanthropic questions, I propose giving a brief sketch of each subject successively.

I.

According to the terms of the decree of March 17th, 1808, which, we must remember, is still the law of the land, a consistory and a consistorial synagogue can be established in every department containing two thousand persons professing the Mosaic faith. Not more than one consistory can be established in the same department. If, on the contrary, one department does not number two thousand Jewish inhabitants, the consistorial circumscription is to comprehend as many departments as will make up the requisite number, and the consistory together with the consistorial synagogue must be established in the town where the Jewish population is the most numerous.

The decree further states that there is to be a central consistory in Paris, with authority over those in the various departments, and to act as the medium through which Judaism enters into connection with the State.

This law has remained unaltered, but what seems strange at first sight is, that the number of consistories has but very slightly increased. There were then, and there are now, but few departments containing two thousand Jewish inhabitants. Although there were Jews in France as early as the sixth or even the fifth century, they were too often

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banished for them to be very numerous or to have established themselves permanently. Then, too, the repressive and vexatious edicts to which they were constantly subjected before the Revolution, made residence in France unattractive to the Jews of other countries, and prevented any considerable number from settling there. On the other hand, when France broke down the barriers which had so long existed between her fellow-citizens of different creeds, other nations began to follow her example in ameliorating the condition of their Jewish subjects, so that the latter had no longer any reason for taking refuge in France and thus sensibly increasing the number of its Jewish population.

After the code of 1808 had been drawn up, the first business was the creation of thirteen consistories. Omitting the four consistories situated in the Rhenish Provinces, as well as the two Italian ones, we find only the small number of seven — Paris, Strasbourg (Alsace), Wintzenheim (Alsace), Metz (Lorraine), Nancy, Bordeaux, and Marseilles—and of these only four (Paris, Metz, Nancy, and Bordeaux) were situated in departments numbering each two thousand Jewish inhabitants. Even these four had to have joined to them several small departments, whose Jewish population was so scanty as to give them no right to have a separate consistory. The three other consistories (Wintzenheim, Strasbourg, and Marseilles) had to be composed of a number of departments in order to make up the requisite number of two thousand Jews in each.

The seven consistories, into which the Jewish population of France was thus divided, made up a total of 46,160 inhabitants; of this number 16,155 belonged to the department of the Lower Rhine, 10,000 to that of the Upper Rhine, and 20,005 to the rest of France.

But few changes have to be mentioned between 1808 and 1870. We must not, however, fail to observe that the Jewish population of France doubled its numbers during that period, and that two new consistories (Lyons, 1857,

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and Bayonne, 1859) were established. When we have added that the seat of one of the other consistories was transferred from Wintzenheim to Colmar, and that three new ones were established in Algeria in 1845, we have said all that is necessary with regard to this period.

The cession of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany after the war of 1870 caused French Judaism a loss of three consistories (Strasbourg, Colmar, and Metz), and a large proportion of its Jewish population. But all was not entirely lost. In the first place, a powerful impulse towards France instantly made itself felt in the annexed Provinces. Secondly, the French Government considered it a binding duty to restore the Judaism of its Jewish subjects to the life and brilliancy which had been so seriously menaced by the loss of its three most populous consistorial circumscriptions. Three new consistories (Vesoul, Lille, and Besançon) were accordingly established, which, with the three in Algeria, made twelve in all, with a population of about 100,000 souls. Of this number about 80,000 live in Paris, including almost all the voluntary exiles from Alsace and Lorraine. The Jewish community in Paris is in fact the only one which steadily increases. Many others actually diminish in numbers, while some remain almost absolutely stationary. The Parisian community develops constantly in every way, for the very sufficient reason that the intensity of the intellectual life in the capital, and the wide field it offers to every branch of human activity, powerfully attracts both French and foreign Jews.

We have seen how the consistories were first established; we have now to enquire into their prerogatives and power, their constitution and election. The central consistory was not always composed in the same way as it is at the present day. Without speaking of the fact that the members of the first central consistory were elected by the Emperor himself from the famous Synhedrin, we have also to remark that the consistory consisted of three Chief Rabbis and two laymen. Since 1844, however, it has been

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composed of one Chief Rabbi and as many laymen as there are departmental consistories. At first the central consistory itself nominated the Chief Rabbi who was to form part of it, while the laymen on the contrary were elected by the various consistories which they represented. At the present day, the central consistory is composed in the same way, but the method of election is changed. Instead of being nominated by the consistories they represent, the lay members of the central consistory are elected in the various departments by universal suffrage.

The central consistory has always had supreme control over all that concerns the ritual and its ministers. It submits to the Government its plans for the nomination of the various Rabbis, and, if necessary, for their transfer from one post to another. It has also the power of demanding the dismissal of a Rabbi, or of a member of a departmental consistory; but this weapon, which the law has confided to the central consistory, has never yet been used. Finally the central consistory, as its name indicates, centralises and transmits any local communications which the departmental consistories have to address to the Government.

It is hardly necessary to observe that the decisions of the central consistory are always promptly accepted by the other consistories, the communal authorities and the Rabbis. The Government, too, treats this important body with every consideration, and its demands are very rarely made in vain. The prestige enjoyed by the central consistory is not surprising, when we remember that this body, composed as it is of the most eminent Jews in France, has always kept with absolute and uncompromising severity to the principle of only admitting to its ranks men of unblemished character and stainless honour. An assembly, which has been successively presided over by men like Crémieux, Frank, Cerfbeer, Munk, and Alphonse de Rothschild, and which counts among its members men who have distinguished themselves in all the arts of peace and war,

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as savants, lawyers, officers and authors, cannot fail, both by precept and example, to exercise a salutary influence upon the French Jews.

The provincial consistories exercise their functions in their respective departments under the control of the central authority. The decree of 1808 minutely prescribed the methods by which their members were to be elected, but this method has been gradually so much altered that nothing of the original remains. At first, twenty-five of the most pre-eminent Jews of the department (or departments) were chosen by the civil authorities to elect the members of the consistory. Later on (1844) the right of election was extended to the various civil and political functionaries. Two years later universal suffrage was introduced for political elections, and a large number of Jews, headed by their consistories, addressed the Government, requesting that the same electoral extension might be granted to the nomination of consistories. A law was then passed, by virtue of which every Jew who had attained the age of twenty-five, was placed on the list of electors. This method is employed at the present day. Thus the consistories, which before 1848 had only expressed the tendencies and opinions of a feeble minority, are now representative of the whole body of French Jews.

These modifications illustrate the change in the view held of Judaism by public opinion in France. "The function of the consistories," says the famous edict of 1808, "is to be on the watch to prevent the Rabbis from giving, either in public or private, any instruction or any explanation of the law which does not conform to the doctrinal decisions of the great Synhedrin." It was obviously a settled conviction that the Jews, in spite of the benefits of emancipation, still remained "a nation within a nation," with hearts and souls apart from those of their fellow-citizens, cherishing feelings of hatred, or at best of indifference, towards the State in the midst of which they lived. The spirit of these unjustifiable accusations,

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accusations still proclaimed aloud from the tribune of the Chamber in December, 1830, is clearly visible in a document which leaves no doubt about the opinions held by Napoleon I. concerning the Jews. This document is the formula in which the members of the first Jewish consistory had to take the oaths before the civil authorities. "I vow and promise before God, on the holy Bible, to show obedience to the constitutions of the empire and loyalty to the Emperor. I promise also to make known anything that I may hear contrary to the interests of the sovereign or of the State." There is absolutely no question in this formula of any devotion to the interests of the Jews! It is very obvious that while such feelings animated the Emperor and the Government, they would not wish to leave the election of the members of the consistories in other hands than theirs. They were to be the functionaries of the Emperor and of the State, and nothing more.

But in 1848 popular ideas had greatly changed. They had risen on the powerful wings of intellectual progress above the prejudices of the Middle Ages. Moreover, the Jews, on their side, had made rapid strides onwards since they had been admitted to share the life and labours of their fellow-citizens. They had been able to prove the injustice of the charge of unsociability with which they had often been reproached. They had shown, and shown, too, not by word but by deed, that the religious dogmas of Judaism did not prevent their taking part in every branch of human activity. Thus, when the Revolution of 1848 occurred, the French had ceased to look on Judaism as a religion, the doctrines of which must be duly supervised and its adherents controlled. The consistories were therefore no longer considered "the guardians of the Synhedrin's declarations," and the humiliating oath, which was formerly compulsory on all their members, was entirely suppressed. From that date until the present day, there was and is no question of the consistories exercising any supervision over the Jewish ministers or their congregations. In the sight of the law

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as well as in that of all classes of society, the Jews are fellow-citizens, whose attachment to their common country and loyalty to her institutions no Frenchman has either the wish or the right to suspect.

The consistories, then, are now merely the intermediaries between the Government and the Jews, and the official administrators of the interests of their religion. They have the duty of appointing the various communal officers (of whom we shall presently have occasion to speak), who, under the responsibility of the consistory, in whose jurisdiction they are, manage the financial business of their community, dispose of its resources, and maintain peace and order in the interior of the synagogues.

The powers of the consistories go still further; they have the right to submit to the central consistory (which, in its turn, submits them to the Government), the nomination, the transferment, and, if necessary, the suspension and re-installation of the Rabbis, Chief Rabbis, and Readers (Chazanim) of their department or departments. They have also the right of censuring the Rabbis, of ordering the synagogues to be closed, and of proclaiming special services in honour of any noteworthy event or solemnity.

Finally, the consistories play the part of guardians to the congregations, who, like minors, unable to act without their guardian's consent, cannot undertake any legal procedure, " without the authorisation and delegation of the consistory."

Synagogue Administration.

In the decree of 1808 we already find mention of an administrative committee, which was to be instituted in every congregation. The Government has never in any way concerned itself with these committees; they were, and are, elected by the consistories, either directly or indirectly, *i.e.*, by appealing to the suffrages of the congregation, and they act in the name, and under the responsi-

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bility, of the consistories. The administrative committees are generally composed of five or six members, of whom one, at the suggestion of the rest, is made president by the consistory. The Paris consistory is now the only one which itself nominates the members of the committees in the various congregations under its jurisdiction. In all other consistories the method adopted is that of universal suffrage, and every individual contributing in any way towards the expenses of public worship has the right of voting. This is an excellent opportunity of bringing life and animation into the community, and the consistories act wisely in retaining it.

To be elected member of the administrative committee is a coveted honour, and we often see men distinguished neither by their piety, nor by their general interest in theological matters, seeking eagerly to obtain this post, and, it must be added, devoting themselves to its functions with great energy and scrupulous conscientiousness. These are mostly generous-hearted men, deeply attached to Judaism (which is, indeed, the case with almost all French Jews), and, at the same time, in sufficiently easy circumstances to permit them frequently to sacrifice both time and money in the interests of their creed. Such sacrifices are constantly needed in the many small French congregations scattered all over the country. France counts about ten large Jewish centres, of which the principal are Paris, Marseilles, Bordeaux, Lyons, Nancy, and Bayonne. But large congregations such as these are the exception, not the rule, and it is only just to say that the sacrifices made by the small congregations do them the greatest credit. No matter how scanty its numbers, each congregation endeavours to possess a synagogue, a Rabbi, a Reader, and, if an organ be impossible, a harmonium, which, on holidays, may enable them to distantly imitate the impressive services held in the great cities. But we must not forget that the cost of all this religious apparatus falls heavily on many a small congregation, whose members, in

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spite of what the anti-Semites may say, are for the most part anything but rich, and who consequently have to make constant and heavy sacrifices to maintain their religious institutions. There exists, for instance, one such congregation composed of only twenty-five families, none of whom are wealthy, which, nevertheless, possesses a synagogue erected at the cost of 100,000 francs, a well-salaried Rabbi, besides a Chazan-schochet and a beadle both of whom live in ease and comfort. It is hardly necessary to point out the sacrifices made ungrudgingly by every member of this tiny congregation.

The administrative committees are composed entirely of laymen. Not that the law forbids the Rabbi to offer himself as a candidate, but the fact that it has not made him a member *ex officio*, has been sufficient to prevent any Rabbi from offering himself for election.

For a Rabbi to present himself for nomination, and thus stake his moral authority against the always doubtful chances of an election, would be wholly contrary to the dignity of a minister of religion. The French Rabbinate has always fully understood this elevated consideration, and not one of its members has ever sought, or, we may safely say, will ever seek, to obtain such a distinction.

It is, nevertheless, natural to ask why the central consistory, which has the power of making and unmaking laws, has not noticed this omission, or, if it has noticed it, why it has not rectified the matter by adding to the Rabbi's privileges that of being *ex officio* an acting member of the administrative committee. Appeals to that effect have not been wanting, and have been supported by many arguments that seem both just and reasonable. It has been suggested, for instance, that though these committees are entirely occupied with matters of administration, yet the administration of a synagogue is, in many ways, connected with the ritual, which is in its turn the province of the Rabbi. The introduction of an organ and a choir, the

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choice of certain chants for weddings, etc., are these questions of administration, or are they part of the ritual? They are in reality connected with both, and it would certainly be wise and profitable if these and a hundred analogous questions could be settled by a combination of lay and religious authority.

The consequences of the present system, moreover, are often fraught with much unpleasantness to the Rabbis, for a committee composed exclusively of laymen, who are frequently very ignorant in religious matters, is not content with merely "deliberating" on questions connected both with administration and religious casuistry. A committee of this kind is very apt to come to a decision which it is anxious promptly to put into execution. But while these decisions sometimes partake of the nature of innovations which the Rabbi cannot accept without protest, it must be admitted that his advice is generally followed. The silence of the law, however, is often evaded by the committees voluntarily and as an act of courtesy inviting the Rabbi to be present.

The Rabbinate.

Before the year 1808 there were already Rabbis in all the towns numbering a certain proportion of Jewish inhabitants. The Emperor's functionaries had, therefore, only to make arrangements relating to the subsequent creation of new Rabbinates, to the establishment of a legal hierarchy within the Rabbinical body, and to the definition of the rights and duties of its members.

The hierarchy then established is the one still existing. It is composed of the Communal or Departmental Rabbis, the Chief Rabbis of the departmental consistories and the Chief Rabbi of the central consistory. A few words concerning these three dignitaries will be necessary.

Every congregation numbering 200 souls can obtain the establishment of a Rabbinate. The Rabbi has the title of Communal Rabbi. Where several congregations in separate

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towns do not possess the number of Jewish inhabitants required by the law for the foundation of a Rabbinate, they can join together for the purpose, and the seat of the Rabbi is naturally fixed in the largest and most important congregation. He is then called a Departmental Rabbi, and the difference of title constitutes the only distinction between him and the Communal Rabbi.

In consequence of the small number of Jews in France there are many more Departmental than Communal Rabbis Even before the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, but few congregations possessed the requisite number of Jewish inhabitants. Those who do are generally surrounded by localities where this is not the case, and where the scanty congregation is consequently affiliated to the larger one. It is obvious, therefore, that not every congregation has a Rabbi.

In this state of things it might be supposed that every Departmental Rabbi would number many congregations in what we may venture to call his diocese. But this is not the case, and the Rabbi who rules over three congregations may consider himself favoured.[1] It is true that, besides the places in which the regular congregations are situated, there are Jews scattered about in almost all the little French towns, and even in the villages; but these are isolated groups of two or three families, unconnected by any common religious ties, ignoring each others' existence, and often unknown even to the Departmental Rabbi, until some occasion, such as a death, causes application to be made to him for his services. The fact of Jewish families inhabiting the same town, and being unconnected by any common tie, is doubtless regrettable from a religious point of view; but it is, we are bound to admit, the result of a certain great privilege, and represents, as it were the "reverse of the medal"—the privilege of the sense of

[1] Before the cession of Alsace and Lorraine there were in France 130 congregations, divided among 63 Rabbis; now there are 89 congregations, divided among 33 Rabbis.

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paternal toleration which animates all classes of Frenchmen. The Jews, who are now admitted to share in all respects the life of their fellow-citizens, and who enjoy the respect and sympathy of all classes of society, no longer feel the need of seeking strength and consolation in that sense of union which was so great a support to them in the days of persecution. Consequently we no longer see the gradual growth in all parts of the country of numerous congregations, whose at first scanty numbers were swelled by all the Jewish families in the surrounding district, gathered together by their religious needs as well as by their social instincts.

The method of nominating the Rabbis has undergone so many changes that a detailed account of them would run to too great a length. Suffice it to say that, after the election had been confided exclusively to the consistory in 1808, it was in 1823 handed over to the administrative committees, returned to the consistory in 1862, and committed ten years later to a certain number of delegates chosen by the consistory from among the members of the congregation or congregations within the jurisdiction of the Rabbinate in question. This was certainly a democratic measure, for though the delegates, no doubt, represented the real opinions of the congregations, it very much weakened the power of the consistory, upon which, after all, the Rabbi is dependent. An important change has, however, been made since 1872. The election has been again confided to the consistories, but a certain number of delegates from the various congregations is appointed to assist them in their choice. This appears to be a fair and equitable compromise, which respects the authority vested in the consistories without violating the dignity and the interests of the congregations, who through their delegates are thus able to state the motives of their selection, and to speak on behalf of the candidate they prefer.

When the consistory and the delegates have made their choice, the name of the successful candidate has to be sent

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to the central consistory. The latter body, after confirming the selection, submits it to the Government for final ratification; but these processes are both merely formal in the strictest sense of the word. Both the central consistory and the Government have the right of annulling the choice of the departmental consistories, but it is a right which has hitherto never been exercised. The central consistory has never submitted to the Government any other candidate than the one previously chosen by the departmental consistory, and, as the French Rabbinate has on principle always avoided touching on the field of politics, the individuals selected to join its ranks are naturally a matter of indifference to the ministers, whose formal approval has to be obtained.

At the election of a Rabbi the central consistory is thus, of its own free will, merely the channel through which the decision of the other consistories is communicated to the Government, and, according to competent judges, this systematic neutrality is often not without its drawbacks. Frequently the electors, composed of the departmental consistory and delegates from its various synagogues, do not know what is to guide them in their choice; how to decide between a young Rabbi, who has not yet had time and opportunity to display his powers and talents, and an old one, who in spite of the affection and esteem by which he may have been surrounded in his former sphere of activity, is not known beyond the limits of his own congregation. Where and how are the delegates and the consistory to find the means of ascertaining that they are giving the post to the candidate who really deserves it the most? As it is impossible for them to ascertain this with anything like certainty, they have recourse to a method which is supposed, rightly or wrongly, and it appears to us more often wrongly, to be the least fallacious way of deciding, by selecting the candidate most distinguished for his oratorical powers. Each competitor is invited to preach on some Sabbath at the synagogue to which he desires to

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be appointed, and on another Sabbath at the consistorial synagogue, so that both the consistory in general and the synagogue in particular have a specimen of his eloquence. Everybody must at once recognise the defects of this system, which is legitimately criticised both by ecclesiastics and laymen. Here is a man, who to-morrow will be the spiritual head of a congregation, over whom he will have no other authority than that given by the elevation of his character, the delicacy of his sentiments, and the integrity of his conduct; and the moral value of this man is to be judged by a display of rhetoric! The sermon has no doubt in our days become a very important part of the Rabbi's duties, but it is not the whole, nor even the chief part of them. His most impressive sermon is his work, and the inspiring example of his entire life.

Again, if this trial sermon gave proof positive of the candidate's powers as a preacher, it might be possible logically to defend the use of this test. But it is obvious that this is by no means the case. How often it happens that the best speakers are at times absolutely uninspired, and by no means on a level with their usual selves. On the other hand, a very inferior orator may chance for once to surpass himself, and to make a deep impression on his audience.[1]

The non-interference of the Government in the choice of a Rabbi is natural and reasonable, for the Rabbi, though a functionary of state, is nevertheless a purely religious one. Again, it is only to be expected that the departmental consistory, to whom all the candidates are probably equally unknown, should merely ratify the choice of the congregation to which the Rabbi is to be appointed. But these reasons do not hold good in the case of the central

[1] I was once speaking on this subject to the president of one of the largest French congregations. "Well," said he, "we selected our Rabbi in consequence of the excellence of his trial sermon. Since then we have found him to be possessed of every imaginable good quality—excepting that of eloquence."

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consistory, which has every opportunity of knowing the candidates; and if, as seems the best plan, the selection were left to the central consistory, it could reasonably hope to "put the right man in the right place."

Each departmental consistory (one of which, as we have seen, is allotted to every department or departments containing a minimum of 2,000 Jewish inhabitants) has a so-called consistorial synagogue, at the head of which is the Departmental Chief Rabbi ("grand rabbin departemental ou régional"). He must be at least thirty years of age, and have been five years in the ministry. He is "ex officio" member of the consistory, and has the right of preaching in all the synagogues belonging to it, of directing what prayers are to be used by the Rabbis attached to those synagogues, and of censuring them if necessary.

The mode of electing the Departmental Chief Rabbi has undergone several changes since 1808, when it was in the hands of an assembly of notables, such as the lay members of the consistories. In 1862 the central consistory was called upon to select from a list of three candidates submitted to it by the departmental consistory in question, and since 1872 the latter body has been assisted in the selection of the three candidates by a certain number of delegates from the various Rabbinates in its circumscription. These delegates are chosen by universal suffrage from among the members of their respective congregations. The names of the three candidates are then submitted to the central consistory, which again preserves its neutrality by simply presenting the name at the head of the list for ministerial ratification. The same arguments which we have already used against the neutrality of the central consistory in the election of an ordinary Rabbi, apply with even greater force to the election of a Chief Rabbi, for it must be remembered that this official, chosen perhaps by the insufficient test of a trial sermon, is an important functionary of state, taking rank as a bishop, and connected with the highest authorities. It is, however, only fair to

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add that the action, or rather inaction, of the central consistory may be accounted for to a certain extent by the following fact:—The Rabbis of France are one and all men who do honour to their office and to their religion; consequently the central consistory is well aware that though the chosen candidates may be of unequal intellectual powers, there is no doubt that their high principles, learning, and disinterestedness will make them worthy of the position they are to fill.

Finally, at the head of the Rabbinical hierarchy stands the Chief Rabbi of France (or to give him his full French title, "le grand rabbin du consistoire central des Israélites de France").

The often mentioned decree of 1808 had appointed three Chief Rabbis, nominated by Napoleon himself, to serve on the central consistory. But all subsequent decrees refer only to one Chief Rabbi of the central consistory, who is elected to his important post by a college composed of the twelve members of the central consistory and two delegates (chosen, as usual, by universal suffrage) from each of the twelve departmental consistories, thus making a total of thirty-six electors. It is hardly necessary to say that on the occasion of the election of the "grand rabbin de France" the central consistory departs entirely from its previous neutrality and inactivity. It is obvious that this must be the case, inasmuch as these thirty-six electors are the only persons concerned in the election of so important an individual as the Chief Rabbi, who not only becomes at once a member of the central consistory, but the real head of French Judaism, whose duty it is to guard and watch over its religion and its fortunes.

II.

These introductory remarks have only brought us to what may be described as the outer border of French Judaism.

We shall be uttering a mere truism in saying that there

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is no part of Europe, except perhaps Poland, in which the religion of Israel has continued to be taught and practised with the fervent uniformity that formerly distinguished it.

A mighty wave of liberalism, and, to speak plainly, of reform, has swept over Europe, shaking religious beliefs to their foundations, setting at close quarters two different parties—those men who, abandoning themselves to the stream, have sought to change the face of the religion, and those men who, attached to the past, have anchored themselves to it as to a rock. Has French Judaism also been troubled by this revolutionary tempest in religious matters, and on what side has the victory fallen—on the side of the spirit of conservatism, or that of reform? In the latter case to what living branch has the axe of renovation been applied?

Let us say, at once, that among French Jews the advocates for religious reform have never received authoritative support. There has never arisen what might be called a popular movement in favour of reform. The few champions of a new order of things were men without a following or religious character, and without any theological or religious knowledge. On the other hand, the large masses have always remained outside the contest. On one occasion, indeed, in 1831, a demand signed by a certain number of persons reached the central consistory, asking that body for certain substantial reforms, such as the transference of the Sabbath to Sunday. The step did not meet with an encouraging reception, so that no such attempt is likely to be made again. For several years, however, a war of the pen has been carried on by certain warriors, but they are isolated soldiers, whose ineffectual blows were discharged in empty air. About the years 1830 to 1840, Judaism in Germany was troubled by religious struggles, which showed themselves not only in virulent controversies, but also in actual schisms. The echo of these severe struggles was reflected in some few French minds. The

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contagion spread. The man who applied the match to the powder was a professor of mathematics, M. O. Terquem, a man of fiery temperament and moderate learning. In a series of pamphlets called "Lettres Tsarphatiques" he sarcastically attacked all religious institutions and traditions. These violent assaults provoked an energetic defence on the part of several Jews of Paris and Metz, who finally reduced to silence the author of this religious war, this leader without an army.

Thus religious observances, the chief object of the attack of O. Terquem, came forth unhurt from this trial, and no attack since that period has been made against them. We are far from pretending that religious observances are carried out as faithfully as of old in the life of French Jews; we shall soon see that it is not so; yet officially at least, in the public organs, there has been no further question since that time of expunging from the religious code the observances, commandments and prohibitions, of which a large number of Jews individually take no account whatever. These official attempts at reform miscarried, but in the case of the ritual ceremonies and the prayers there was no similar immunity. There the spirit of reform, far from laying aside its weapons of attack, gained ground every day. Since the first years which followed the systematisation of the ritual, it was understood that religious ceremonies under their disorderly and unedifying shape, and many prayers under their antiquated form, did not answer to the demands of the Jewish people, or to the requirements of Jewish hearts.

The central consistory in 1831 had already taken an important step in publicly prohibiting the preaching of the sermon in any other language than French. This measure, radical at the time, was far from satisfying the mass of Jews some years later. Rabbis and laymen were soon agreed that a renovation of religious ceremonies was necessary. The communities were everywhere more or less flourishing, everywhere synagogues were erected. Every-

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where the intellectual level was raised, and under pain of being entirely abrogated, it was evidently necessary for the ritual to put on a more modern garb. Upon this point there was a universal agreement. A difference of opinion was displayed only when it became a question of passing from theory to practice, and of laying hands upon prayers and customs which had the authority of time, a sanction inviolable in the eyes of some, empty in the eyes of others, venerable but not sacrosanct in the eyes of the large majority.

According to the one party it was necessary then to remodel completely and ruthlessly the ritual, its customs and liturgy: the Hebrew of the synagogue had to be replaced throughout by the vernacular, all the Piyutim suppressed, and the organ and the choir introduced into every synagogue. The organ, it is true, was already adopted at the consistorial synagogue in Paris, but it was not used except on the Sacred Festivals, while elsewhere the synagogues were not provided with organs.

According to the other party, all the prayers in use ought to be respected, including the Piyutim. As for the organ it must be absolutely banished from a Jewish house of prayer. For, they argued, either this instrument did not exist in the Temple of Jerusalem, and so its introduction to the modern temple was an infringement of the command against imitating the religious practices of non-Jews; or it already had a place in the services of the Temple at Jerusalem, and so its admission into the modern temple is a profanation.

Lastly, according to the majority, it was wise to eliminate from the services superfluous prayers, repetitions and those of the Piyutim which, in consequence of their incorrect style or their purport, no longer corresponded with the condition of the mind and heart of modern Jews: yet withal to touch with extreme caution the established order of things. This is the system which has prevailed, and which still prevails to-day in France.

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Yet Rabbis and governing bodies halted, troubled and divided between the desire of bringing more *éclat* to the religious services, of breathing more fervour into the heart, and the fear of laying a rash hand on their consciences. These hesitations and troubles, real, though hidden, were always in existence. Neither then nor subsequently did they cause any division in the heart of the communities, but they created in French Judaism a condition of things unworthy of the advance it had made, a kind of chaos of opinions and expressions which demonstrated the urgent necessity of endowing the whole of France with a uniform ritual. In 1856 the chief Rabbi of the central consistory, M. Ulmann, took a wise and courageous course. He summoned to Paris all the chief Rabbis of the consistories, and invited them to discuss the questions about which opinions were then divided, to take their decisions, and, in a word, to elaborate a project for reorganising the ritual for the whole of French Judaism.

The chief Rabbis of Strasburg and Colmar had, on a previous occasion, already found it opportune to unite all the Rabbis of their district, and to submit to their deliberation a certain number of projects of ritual reform; but these were simple consultations, without any authority that could bind all the Jews of France. The synod, summoned by M. Ulmann, and working under him as president, was on the other hand able to give decisions which applied to all the Jewish communities of France, and carried in them an incontestable moral value.

This assembly, in which, after a deep discussion, a vote was taken on the serious questions which had been agitating men for some years with reference to the ritual, ought to be noticed as an important event in the peaceful history of the ritual of French Judaism. Not that it took any decisive step forward. In fact, when we read the account given of the sittings of this assembly, we are present at the struggle of those feelings which were fighting for the mastery in the heart of every member;—

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a conflict which is the eternal history of all hearts that love truth and peace—the struggle between the desire of advancing, and the fear of going too far. It was felt to be necessary at any cost to give to the ritual the means of touching the soul, and it was desired absolutely to avoid frightening timid consciences.

But this assembly was an important event, because it was the opening of a new era. It was the starting point of all the modifications, additions and suppressions, by which, in the course of time, the uniformity of religious worship has been affected. Besides, beyond the legitimate timidity displayed by the decisions of this assembly, there is seen to hover constantly, if the expression may be used, like a fixed and dominant idea, the notion of purifying the ritual and modernising its form.

In order to open and prepare a way for ritual reforms without on the other hand ordaining them, the Synod adopted a certain number of resolutions, but took care to establish on the subject of each that the Rabbis, in consultation with the governing body and with the chief Rabbi, their superior officer, are henceforth to be the judges of the opportuneness of those reforms. We shall see presently what were the few and unimportant innovations which this open breach introduced into the ritual, down to the time at which we are now writing.

But before describing these innovations which we have just mentioned, we must point out that now-a-days there is no question at all of an official religious reform, and that as regards ritual, no alteration, omission, or addition of ceremony or prayer which the Rabbi might deem expedient is ever the object of any criticism or any observation on the part of the public. In the first place, religious indifference is extreme. Reforms in matters of observances can be desired and demanded only by men who still cherish solid convictions, who, finding themselves put to inconvenience in their life by the laws relating to food, and to the cessation from work on Sabbaths and holy-days, would

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like to be able to remain within the pale of a sort of orthodoxy, and at the same time to free themselves from the troublesome part of these commands. But to-day where are these substantial religious convictions? They are at any rate very few and far between in France. Observance of the Sabbath and holydays by resting from business and closing up offices, has become a thing almost unknown and quite phenomenal. The laws relating to the mixture, choice and preparation of food, though practised by a small number, are generally neglected. There are many who do not give up the use of leavened bread during Passover, many also who abstain from it for one or two days only. Others, in order to satisfy at once their desires and their consciences, push originality so far as to serve ordinary bread and pass-over-cakes on the same table. As for living in tabernacles (booths) during the Festival of Tabernacles, this practice has become for a very large majority a mere memory. With convictions thus enfeebled, and with this easy-going faith, the necessity of a general reform is not at all impressed upon the eyes of the less religious, and everyone feels himself at liberty to ask his own conscience, and to execute its more or less indulgent orders.

Another reason why an official reform of religious practices has no *raison d'être* is that in France no trace whatever is found to-day of what is the starting point of all official reform, viz., the passionate strife that excites the minds of men, hollows out an abyss between them, and drives those in the two camps to extremes. In France toleration is without bounds; not only the mass of indifferent people have a horror of quarrels and divisions, but fervent and observant believers do not understand those attacks, the sounds of which once for a little while re-echoed in France, and those regrettable clan hatreds, which rage still to the present time in other countries in the midst of Jewish communities, and divide them into two irreconcilable camps. In France there can be seen living together side by side, united like brothers, treating one another with

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reciprocal goodwill: on the one hand those sincerely pious men who remain attached to the slightest Talmudic commands, and on the other hand those incorrigible sceptics who treat as useless the precepts of the Bible. Both elements, moreover, are mingled in our temples, at the services and solemn ceremonies, to which, thanks to the renovation which reclothed them, without at all robbing them of their ancient character, both the observant and the non-observant hasten — those who have openly attacked that which they call the prejudices of the past, and those who tenderly preserve all the traditions bequeathed by antiquity. We ought to add, to be exact, that if we no longer find a large number of families observant with the faithfulness and scrupulous conscientiousness of former times, it does not follow that the majority of Jews have broken with all the observances of Judaism. By no means; it is true that cessation of work on the Sabbath has almost become obsolete, together with other important customs; but the rite of circumcision is, as a rule, preserved. The very small number of bold spirits is easily counted who have pushed their religious independence so far as to free themselves from this Mosaic command.

Nor are the numbers of the parents who are content that their children marry with purely civil rites more numerous. A religious celebration of the marriage is almost without exception required, even by those who from one end of the year to the other do not at all recollect that they are Jews. It is also very curious to notice that in families where people are no longer Jews except in name, just as in the most orthodox families, it is round the religious ceremony of the Synagogue, and not round the civil ceremony in the Town Hall, that all the honours of the real celebration are gathered. The civil ceremony is always cold, without any pomp or feeling, while the religious ceremony is always touching and solemn.

Mixed marriages between Jews and Christians have

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in modern France become less infrequent. This tendency to mixed marriages, which is more marked as time goes on, is not peculiar to any one class. In the highest and lowest families these new customs, during recent years, have often found an indulgent reception. French Jews are so intimately associated with the representatives of other religions, that with the additional help of religious indifference the increase of these unions could easily be foreseen. Certainly Judaism is not yet in danger, although most often it loses the offspring of these unions. But a reassuring feature for Judaism is that the best known Jewish families, those that exercise a powerful influence over the rest of the Jews, have shown many times that they neither indulge in nor approve of marriages between Jews and Christians. Still, when I say that I myself know the whole Jewish population in a certain district around Paris, and that, within this small circle, which does not number more than four hundred persons, there are ten "mixed" unions, it will be seen that it is worth while to record this fact.

On the other hand, apostasy from Judaism to Christianity is absolutely unknown. Conversions are so unusual and alien to the French mind that, even in the "mixed" unions of which we have just spoken, the two parties never think of giving up their respective religions.

And why should the name of Jew be given up in France where the Jewish population is distinguished by its intelligent activity and its morality? Further, in this country there is unbounded liberty as regards all beliefs and opinions. There is no difference between those who profess different creeds. In France a change of religion always implies a notion of treachery. The renegade is regarded as a deserter, who has been induced to abjure the faith of his fathers by a desire for money or a complaisant conscience. Why, then, in a society where every branch of human activity and every honour is open to every member of the State without distinction—why should any one, in spite of

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his want of belief, assume a ridiculous garb, and brand himself with apostasy?

This freedom of belief, this brotherhood among members of different persuasions of which we have spoken above, are very natural to the French temperament. The most violent attacks of the anti-Semites will not prevail against them. The various pamphlets of Drumont and his meagre following have had no influence upon ideas and customs in France. Jews continue to enjoy, it is needless to say, not only every benefit of the law, but even all the sympathy and respect they deserve. They are received, according to their rank and education, in all classes of society without any hesitation. One would almost be justified in saying that anti-Semitism does not exist in France. There are some very few writers—epicures in scandal—who have been joined by some bitter and envious minds and the everlasting band of those who fish in troubled waters, who may be regarded as anti-Semites; but the French nation absolutely rebels against their hateful appeals, and is already beginning to lose that interest and curiosity in them which caused the success of the first books of Drumont. The most clear proof that the French nation is opposed to anti-Semitism is the result of the Municipal elections which took place in Paris on April 28, 1890. It was in Paris that the leaders of this new sect had placed all their batteries. There had been no dearth of money, attempts at corruption, speeches, or writings, and yet not a single person of the anti-Semitic clique was elected, or had even a number of votes sufficient to give him the least hope. The chief of the band M. Drumont, only obtained a ridiculously small total. Anti-Semitism may be said to have ended its life. Crushed in the capital, it will never again recover from its defeat.

We believe we have given a short and exact sketch of the intellectual attitude of French Judaism. We have shown that none among the most liberal-minded trouble themselves to pronounce the word "reform" in reference

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to ceremonial observances. We have also shown that on the ground of ritual ceremonies, and of the Liturgy, which is their foundation, the Assembly of Chief Rabbis (1856) had deemed it expedient to take certain measures for modifying the ritual, and to leave to allthe Rabbis in France a latitude in certain matters to alter, improve, and make innovations when they considered it opportune so to do. We shall now proceed to explain in its chief outlines what has been realised up to the present time.

At the outset it is necessary to allude to the changes which have been introduced by the force of circumstances into the life and career of the Rabbi, who is the soul of all religious worship. In the midst of the community in which he represents the religious idea, he is the only man to-day who possesses religious knowledge. Hence comes his great authority at the present time in the domain of ritual, where he may be said to have at least the power, if not the right, to bind and loose, to add, withdraw and modify.

We ought then, above all, to devote some few lines to the duties of the Chief Rabbi in the Central Consistory, and the more so as his career does not at all resemble that of the other Rabbis and Chief Rabbis, his province being quite different. All the communities in France are entrusted to his care. From time to time, on certain solemn occasions especially, he visits them and brings to them and their Rabbis the prestige of his presence. His visits always leave behind them, as it were, a renewal of religious life. But if he is the venerated chief of all the communities, if he comes on all important occasions, *e.g.*, at the inauguration of synagogues, to make the Sacred Word re-echo in all the Jewish pulpits in France, this supreme dignitary of French Judaism has not any community of his own to which he can devote himself with all his soul. Formerly his days were occupied with innumerable consultations on religious matters addressed to him from all quarters under his jurisdiction. To-day the laxness of observances and the diminution of Talmudic studies leave

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him leisure. Again, formerly the Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory was a kind of president over the tribunal of the Beth Din, which decided, as a final court, disputed questions on religious subjects. We do not mean to imply that since the Revolution in 1789 the Jews have been amenable to tribunals other than those of the whole French nation. The Beth Din, in the true meaning of the term, ceased to exist after that Revolution, but for some time the Chief Rabbi used still to call himself—and this title was legal and in conformity with the terms of the Decree of 1808—"Ab Beth Din," and used often to perform the duties associated with the title. Now-a-days there exists nothing like this in the powers of the Chief Rabbi of France. His work now consists for the most part in contributing to the foundation of good works, and in displaying his interest in religious and charitable institutions by his frequent visits, and by the support of his influence with the higher classes.

This career, so defined, is assuredly noble and fruitful in good actions; but it is none the less true that this absence of a community to which the Chief Rabbi of France, like the other ministers of religion, could devote himself, is a void difficult to fill up without suppressing the Grand Rabbinate of Paris, and entrusting to a single clergyman the post of Chief Rabbi of Paris and Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory. This measure is proposed by the most prominent men every time the Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory has to be nominated.

But if the Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory cannot take part in the active daily life of any particular community, the same cannot be asserted with regard to the other Chief Rabbis and the local Rabbis, and it is among these above all that the duties of their holy office have completely changed. Taking literally the precept, והגית בו יומם ולילה, "Thou shalt meditate on the law day and night," the spiritual chief in former ages used to make the study of the law and the Talmud his constant occupation. This study was interrupted only by the numerous (שאלות)

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consultations on points of religion and casuistry which the faithful used to submit to him. Now-a-days laymen are no longer themselves troubled by religious doubts, and do not feel the necessity of submitting their scruples to the knowledge of a doctor of the law.

On the other hand, under the fertile inspiration of modern ideas a considerable change has been effected in the manner of life of the Jews, and it is this new condition of things which has created new duties for the Rabbis of our times. Thanks to the softening of their manners, Jews have left off concentrating themselves all in the same district. In French towns the Jews are no longer seen to mass themselves together and pen themselves up in a kind of voluntary Ghetto, where they must all know one another intimately through meeting each day inside or outside the religious institutions. Thoroughly at home in the various paths of social life, they are scattered over all parts of the town, unknown to one another, no longer united by that powerful sentiment of solidarity which formerly induced all the Israelites of the same town to make themselves a community, and to form one large family. Hence there now devolves on the Rabbi the imperious duty of frequently visiting these scattered individuals, in the midst of whom he is the solitary point of union. The Rabbi of the present day is compelled to become a public man, a man of society—we were going to say a man of the world. This is inevitable, and the Rabbinate of the present day has recognised the fact. Not that the Rabbi, as might be supposed, is transformed into a wandering preacher with a moral lesson always upon his lips. The French Jews have no liking for religious discussions, nor for sermons outside the synagogue. The French Rabbi, whose manner of life breathes dignity of soul and elevation of heart, discards the *rôle* of preacher when he descends from the pulpit. It is his presence in the families and his visits, which are never without their effect, that bring in and retain in the bosom of the community families separated from one

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another, and which without him would very quickly forget, not only that they are Jews, but that religion, in order to endure, must find its expression in external worship.

But modern times have brought yet another duty to the Rabbinate, and this, the duty of preaching often, has been particularly entrusted to it by the Synod of Chief Rabbis. Our fathers had no need of the eloquence or the sermons of the Rabbi in order to believe and observe. Faith then filled all hearts, and the love of prayer was sufficient to attract the people to the synagogue. Sermons were very rare in past times. Pulpit addresses were heard but twice a year, on the Saturday before Passover and the Saturday before the Day of Atonement. For the rest of the year the pulpit was silent, nor did any one think of complaining about it; and it must be admitted that no injury was done to our religion, belief, or observances. In modern times all this has changed. Prayer is not a necessity for hearts that are no longer filled with faith. In order to make Jews walk on the road to the house of prayer, one must modify the length of the services, and vivify the barrenness of prayers no longer intelligible. The sermon must be utilised as an attractive force. Accordingly, a sermon, or rather, an address, has become a regular institution in every important service in every community, however insignificant. Nearly every Saturday, and in some communities, on every Saturday, before the Scrolls of the Law are taken from the Ark, the Rabbi briefly expounds the more striking passages in the Portion of the day. Often he takes one of the passages or an expression in this Portion as a text, or rather, as a pretext for bringing to light some important principle of Judaism. Certainly, no festival ever passes in any Jewish community without a sermon, and this sermon has become the chief attraction in the religious service.

The frequency with which sermons are delivered at present is, then, a modern innovation, but the quality also of the sermons has been altered, or rather, the sermon has

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entirely changed its character. Formerly, the sermon was a long explanation of Talmudic subtleties, sometimes a kind of religious exhortation, in which the preacher often severely abused his audience, and sometimes it was a combination of the two. During more recent times the sermon quite ceased to be a Talmudic exercise, too learned for a modern audience, and became a series of admonitions falling from the mouth of the representative of God, upon the faithful who were humbled and affected by his words. Happy time when the preacher literally "preached to the converted," when he had only to threaten the thunderbolts of heaven, and men of firm faith, and of irreproachable past, beat their breasts. Now-a-days, the religious life of his audience would be a ready object of attack to the defender of the principles and observances of Judaism. But to make this attack would be an anachronism, a display of bad taste, the inopportuneness, or rather, the danger of which the Rabbi thoroughly appreciates. At present it is the duty of the orator above everything not to alienate the kindly disposition of his hearers, to gain their sympathy, and lastly, to attract them to the service, and to make them fond of the synagogue. No more indignant tirades against the caprices of our age, no more barren discussions on questions of dogma and theology—the dominant note is soft and paternal. In other respects the form must be carefully finished, the composition in conformity with the rules of rhetoric, the style chaste, and the whole logical and suitable to modern taste. Does this amount to saying that the Rabbi of the present day sacrifices depth to form, and forgets that his office is to preach the love of God and religion, to make our hearts better, and to guide our consciences? It is needless to refute this statement; it is the means, and not the end that has changed. But we must not forget that the public of to-day—the public which no longer has its faith riveted in its soul—is a spoilt child, a reluctant patient, in whom the love of austere virtue may perhaps be inspired by taking care, as the proverb says, to

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gild the pill. You praise before his face his docility and activity in order to make him docile and active. It is the same with the Jews to whom the Rabbi addresses himself. Another form of oratory which is much used in France to-day, and not without profit, consists in bringing before the audience for their admiration all the great moral beauties, all the fertile emotions, and all the exalted aspirations which arise out of every religious ordinance, and every ceremony of Judaism.

It is to M. Lazare Isidore, Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory (1867-1889), that the glory belongs of having been the first to give this new direction to the eloquence of the Jewish pulpit. His personal character was a great help to him in the task which he had undertaken. This excellent minister, whose kindness and sweetness of disposition were proverbial, felt that the encouragements and promises of a God of love and mercy came more easily to his lips than terrifying threats of a God of justice. But it is his present successor, M. Zadoc Kahn, who has shown himself possessed of the happy gift to a marvellous degree. His sermons are perfect patterns for style and depth. In the three volumes which have hitherto been published it is impossible to read a page without emotion, without a sense of intimate contact with every noble and beautiful ideal. This is the true charm by which effectually to turn the ideal into the actual. It may be of interest, before finishing this account of the changes introduced into the career of the Rabbi, and into the oratorical art which he cultivates, to notice the absolute independence which he enjoys in the pulpit. Certainly by law the Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory and the Central Consistory itself have the right of control and censure over every act and deed of the members of the Jewish clergy; the Chief Rabbi of the Departmental Consistory and the Departmental Consistory have the same rights over the acts and deeds of the Rabbis of the Circumscription. But law is one thing and custom another, and to the honour of the Chief Rabbis and the

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Consistories be it said that neither the former nor the latter have ever thought of limiting the freedom of the preacher, or of controlling the use he makes of his liberty. He is absolute master of his words and his doctrines.

It is fair also to recognise that the French Rabbi never descends to the dangerous ground of religious controversy and of Biblical exegesis. The public would not be at all pleased to see him transform the pulpit into a schoolmaster's reading desk. But, on the other hand, if perchance the preacher happened to say that in the field of Biblical and Talmudic literature, he adhered, upon some point, to the statements or hypotheses of contemporary criticism, he would not on that account incur blame from his superiors. In spite of the legal hierarchy, every minister of religion is responsible for his doctrines to God and his own conscience. Whether, for instance, the Rabbi were to say that the Book of Isaiah is the work of a single author, according to the Talmud and early writers, or according to modern criticism, to assert, when quoting some particular verse, the claim of a second Isaiah; whether he speaks of the Psalms of David in accordance with orthodox tradition, or assigns, with modern expositors, different periods for the production of a great number of the Psalms; whether, in his opinion, Ecclesiastes be the work of Solomon or of some malcontent in the reign of Herod—the speaker is free to express openly those opinions and hypotheses which he thinks are closest to the truth.

This great liberty which the preacher enjoys finds undoubtedly a sufficient justification in the fact that the preacher is always a qualified and certificated Rabbi, who has to be furnished with every proper guarantee in respect of knowledge, character and integrity. In fact, the Rabbi in France is the only person who has the right of preaching. While in other countries, *e.g.*, in Germany, the officiating minister, the Chazan (Reader), or the schoolmaster, ascends the pulpit when the Rabbi is not present, that honour

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is denied in France to every person who is not duly invested with the functions of a Rabbi. The fact that everyone who does not wear the robes of a Rabbi is prohibited from preaching in the synagogue, is, we admit, the best safeguard of the dignity of the pulpit, but it occasionally involves some regrettable results. Not every community possesses its own Rabbi; on the contrary, a single Rabbinate has sometimes jurisdiction over two or three, or as many as six communities. What safeguard is there against these communities being entirely deprived of the pleasure as well as the benefit of exhortation from the pulpit? The Rabbi does his best. He undertakes the exacting duty of spending in each of these communities one or even two Saturdays in each year; but during all the rest of the year, including the Holy Festivals, they do not receive from him a word of comfort or consolation to exalt their hearts or enlighten their souls. In this matter there is undoubtedly a very grievous void that requires to be filled up. There might be one means of meeting the difficulty, viz., by charging the officiating ministers in the communities that do not possess a Rabbi, to preach the word of God. Every community is provided with officiating ministers, and it would thus have its preacher, a kind of sub-Rabbi in its midst. But in order to realise this project, it would be necessary for the French readers (Chazanim), to have, like the German Cantors for instance, some considerable knowledge of sacred and profane literature. But our Readers are far from possessing this knowledge; they are nearly always excellent singers, often also excellent musicians; we admit that a certain number of them have a kind of skill in reading Hebrew texts, but with very few exceptions these Chazanim are absolutely ignorant men, who have never studied, who are incapable of explaining a line of Hebrew, or of writing grammatically a single sentence in French.

The words "School of Chazanim" are on many lips, and the religious press has already often advocated the establishment of such a school. It would be a kind of seminary

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in which these officiating ministers, whose duties have assumed some importance in our modern services, would acquire, together with the science of singing sacred tunes, some knowledge of the Bible and Talmud, and also of secular literature. This would, without doubt, be a useful establishment, but though it may exist in our wishes or dreams it will never get beyond that state. The number of communities is not sufficiently large in France to demand the establishment of a school for the purpose of preparing officiating readers.

Moreover, the type of Chazan was long since fixed in France; in a Chazan there is expected a fine voice, a little musical knowledge and a more or less correct pronunciation of Hebrew. This constitutes the normal Chazan; the French public would consider it very strange to see him ascend the pulpit and lecture to the assembly of the faithful.

We think we ought to mention an idea due to M. Isidore, an idea which, though excellent in itself, has not had the success which it deserved. It was in 1871, just after the war which had caused France to lose forty rabbinates, together with Alsace and Lorraine. The Central Consistory, as well as the Government, proposed on the one hand to provide substitutes for the lost posts, and on the other to provide employment for the young Rabbis, who, through their disinclination to continue their duties in Alsace-Lorraine, were wandering in France without any appointment. It was then that M. Isidore asked for and obtained the foundation of new Rabbinates in different towns. But in these towns the communities were too unimportant to permit of the luxury of two officers, a Rabbi and a Chazan. So M. Isidore seized the idea of combining the two offices, and submitted to the communities the project of joining the duties of officiating minister to the sacerdotal functions of their Rabbi. This innovation was approved of by all these little towns, which had thenceforth a Rabbinate; and the change was in reality a good one.

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The office lost some of its artistic and imposing character; but it gained in dignity and fervour. None but the Rabbi is well fitted for being the שליח צבור, the chosen representative and advocate of the assembly of the faithful. Nevertheless, this ingenious organisation did not last long, and for a very simple reason. The public, which is now-a-days wanting in faith, seeks, as we have said above, attraction in the synagogue, attraction in singing as well as in preaching, and the Rabbi has not always the same power to satisfy this double desire. Hence, in all these communities, one after the other, a recognised Chazan was added to a recognised Rabbi, in spite of the senseless expense entailed by the presence of this new functionary who is deemed so indispensable. In the whole of France we do not know of more than two communities (Nantes and Pau) which have not yet divided these twin functions, for a while fused together, and these instances are undoubtedly to be explained by exceptional financial reasons.

Though there exists no school for training Chazanim, and for giving them the elementary instruction that would be so necessary for them, the same is not the case with the Rabbinate. France has for a long time possessed an establishment where our young ministers may acquire the religious and secular knowledge necessary for the worthy performance of their office.

We must go back almost to the beginning of the emancipation of the Jews, in order to trace the first steps towards the formation of an official training college for those who were intending to adopt the clerical career. Scarcely had the Jews been enabled, under the protection of liberal laws, to introduce into their worship a little order and regularity, when they very soon perceived how little the knowledge and culture, and consequently, also, the preaching, of their ministers were in harmony with the new position of Judaism. It goes without saying that the staff of Rabbis was not changed immediately after the emancipation, and the decrees of the Government, and the

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instructions of the Consistories were not sufficient to inspire them with knowledge. The Jewish clergy was almost in its entirety composed (and still remained composed for a time) of former merchants, who, to obtain their livelihood, combined the ministry with trade. They were generally excellent Talmudists, and profound casuists, but it can be easily conceived that these men, "*unius libri*," would be but moderate orators, and religious chiefs whose influence would decrease in proportion to the rise in the level of education around them.

Thus the establishment of a Rabbinical school was indispensable to the new order of things. With this view the Imperial Government was approached, but no result ensued. In 1829 the Central Consistory returned to the charge, and this time the Government ordered an inquiry as to the feeling of the Departmental Consistories. The latter responded enthusiastically in support of this project; the formation of this school was decided upon in principle, but it was less easy to agree upon the town in which to place it. The immense majority of French Jews were then to be found in Alsace-Lorraine; and Metz, the capital of Jewish Lorraine, was long a real home of Talmudic studies. Metz consequently carried the day, and a decree of the Government dated August 21st, 1829, announced the creation of this institution under the name of the Central Rabbinic School. Joined to this decree was a schedule concerning the mode of admission, the programme of studies, and the administration. Thirty years later the seminary was still at Metz; during the interval the school had provided from its scholars all the French Rabbinates, but the programme of secular studies had not undergone the slightest change. The level of education among the Jews, on the other hand, had been greatly raised since the period when the school was established. It was time, if the Rabbinic school and Rabbis were to preserve their prestige, to raise the syllabus of studies to the standard required by modern demands.

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On the other hand, at Paris, the Jewish population had considerably increased. Paris was no longer the modest community of former times, but had become the head and heart of French Judaism. So it was the capital which was now fixed upon as the seat of the Rabbinic school. Moreover the community of Paris had not alone become the soul of Judaism, but it was also in the town of Paris that, thanks to the instruction of the most eminent masters in France, and to the intellectual and scientific movement that influenced everybody, young ministers could henceforth obtain the knowledge which is necessary for them in our days. The transference of the Central Rabbinic School was then energetically demanded by all those who were interested in the future of the Rabbinate and of Judaism. During the deliberations of the Synod in 1856, the chief Rabbis unanimously voted for this measure. A decree dated July 1st, 1859, ordered the transference; henceforth the school was no longer to be called "The Central Rabbinic School," but "The Jewish Seminary."

After various migrations, the Seminary is now comfortably settled in some large specially constructed buildings, situated in a healthy and quiet neighbourhood. The pupils, for the most part boarders (though day pupils have an equal right of admission), have a holiday three times a week, Saturday the whole day, Sunday afternoon, and Thursday from 2 to 4. To gain admittance to this Seminary, the applicant must be eighteen years old, possess the diploma of Bachelor, know the meaning of any verse in the Bible, and must be able to expound clearly a passage of the Talmud with the Tosaphot which refer to it.

The yearly entrance examinations take place in the presence of the committee of management, presided over by the Chief Rabbi of France, in October and November (1st of Marhesvan). The course of study lasts for six years. At the end of these six years, the pupil is examined in all the subjects studied during his stay at the Seminary, and, according to the qualities displayed in the examinations.

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receives the title of Rabbi or Chief Rabbi (Grand Rabbi). This last title gives its owner, after five years' service, and after having submitted to the judgment of the committee of management a thesis on a Talmudical subject, the right of becoming a candidate, when the time comes, for any post of Chief Rabbi of a Departmental Consistory.

The committee of management is composed of certain members of the Central Consistory and of certain members of the Consistory of Paris.

The pupils who have reached the third year of their studies are bound to deliver in turn a sermon once a month in the oratory of the Seminary, in the presence of the committee of management.

As regards the studies, which are naturally the object of special care, the following is the syllabus for every week: Talmud—six lessons of two hours each. Three of these lessons are devoted to the Halachah, two to the Hagadah, and one to Methodology. For the Halachah, first the text of the Gemara is studied, and the Tosaphot which refer to it with the Commentaries מהרש"א, מהר"ם שיף and מהרש"ל then the student proceeds to the ראשונים (ר"ן, רי"ף, רא"ש) and lastly the אחרונים (טור, שלחן ערוך). For the Hagadah they read the different passages of Hagadah which are found scattered in the Talmud. For method, they pass in review the texts before their eyes, and distinguish the different modes and rules of reasoning employed by the Talmud. At these different lessons, it is the pupils who, under the direction of their teacher, carry on the discussion.

Theology.—Two lessons of two hours each. This study comprises the explanation and criticism of the principal works of Jewish theologians (Maimonides, Albo, Saadiah, etc.).

Hebrew.—Three hours of Biblical exegesis, and one hour for the correction of a Hebrew exercise. For exegesis, different parts of the Bible are successively taken, with special reference to grammar and philology.

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Jewish History.—Two lessons of two hours each. This course, founded by M. Isidore Loeb ten years ago, is devoted to the post-Biblical history of the Jews down to the present day.

French.—Two lessons of one hour each; the pupils bring some written work at each lesson.

Greek and Latin.—One lecture of one hour, during which are read the classical and non-classical Latin and Greek ancient authors (Plautus, Horace, etc., Plato, Homer, Aristophanes, etc.).

Philosophy.—One lecture of one hour. The teacher treats of psychology, ethics, and logic, as well as of the great questions of metaphysics. During the first half of the year the teacher delivers lectures; during the second half the pupils, under the direction of their professor, discuss the subjects they have learned. All the pupils compose every month an essay upon a given subject.

Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldee.—Two hours of Arabic, and half an hour of Syriac or Chaldee. In Arabic they now translate the Koran and Saadiah, in Chaldee, Onkelos, and in Syriac a collection of anecdotes.

German.—One hour. Formerly this lesson was of practical use, since most of the Rabbinates were then established in Alsace, where sermons were delivered in German Now-a-days, this subject is of a scientific use, since there are numerous learned works in German on Jewish subjects, and these works must be studied.

Synagogal Singing.—One hour. It became necessary to include this subject when, after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, the French Rabbis were compelled to add to their other duties those of officiating ministers in the recently-founded Rabbinates. It still has its use in the present day.

Elocution.—Two lessons of an hour each. The pupils read aloud, and the master gives them advice in the art of clear enunciation.

Thus no pains are spared to make this school a true home of learning. It is, moreover, entrusted to the guid-

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ance of M. Trénel, a Chief Rabbi, a man of intelligent devotion and profound knowledge. The State grants a yearly subvention of 22,000 francs for the expenses of this institution, an absurdly small sum compared with the cost of maintaining the institution, and supporting the students. The Paris Consistory makes up the annual deficit.

But the solicitude of the Consistory does not confine itself to the Seminary. When the level of the studies in the Seminary was gradually raised, it was necessary to increase the difficulty of the entrance examinations. But there was no school in France where those who intended to devote themselves to the career of a Rabbi could acquire the religious and secular knowledge necessary to gain admission into the Seminary. This difficulty was a great obstacle to young aspirants to the Rabbinate. There was however already in Paris a school called "Talmud Torah," which was established as early as 1852. Founded by a special society, it became attached to the Consistory in 1853. The Consistory made use of this school, and transformed it into a kind of minor Seminary, a sort of preparatory school where children admitted while they were young might acquire, under the guidance of good masters, the elements of religious knowledge side by side with the usual secular instruction, which latter was indispensable for admission into the Seminary.

In proportion as the programme of studies in the Seminary was increased, the Talmud Torah, which has always kept its original name, enlarged its aims so that the young pupils were prepared for the degree of Bachelor without prejudice to the sacred studies which occupied their appropriate place in an establishment of this nature.

This establishment provides gratuitous instruction to day pupils, and receives boarders at low fees. Children of poor parents can obtain every year scholarships and exhibitions.

As this school is not recognised by the State, it is a very great burden to the Consistory, especially since it spares

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no expense to perfect the institution. After having, like the Seminary, occupied successively different sites, the Talmud Torah was transferred in 1872 to the same establishment as the Seminary, and entrusted to the same principal.

Instruction is given by a staff of eleven professors. There are three divisions. The first division has twenty lessons divided among the study of the Bible, Rashi, Hebrew grammar, Mishnah, French, Latin, Greek, geography, history, science, German, Synagogal music, and gymnastic exercise.

The second division has nineteen hours, divided between the study of the Bible, Rashi, Hebrew grammar, Talmud (without the Tosaphot), history, geography, science, German and gymnastic exercise.

The third division has nineteen hours, utilized for the study of the same branches, but more advanced than the second division, and in learning the Talmud Tosaphot are included.

We now come to treat of the present condition of the ritual. First, as to the additions. We have already pointed out the necessity felt by Rabbis of preaching frequently, in order to attract the public to the synagogue. Not content with having sermons at ordinary services, new services have been instituted, and it is in these that the sermon is the great attraction. What we wish to point out specially is, the solemnity of the afternoon service which takes place in the Consistorial Synagogue in Paris and in the synagogues of many other important communities. To be strictly accurate, we must say that this innovation was mainly effected out of regard for the female portion of the community. Though they attend on the festivals, they rarely come to the synagogue on ordinary Sabbaths. Few tradesmen or manufacturers, indeed, cease from work on the day "devoted to rest." This custom is so general that the Rabbinate would in vain try to oppose it. It is the ladies, then, who must be relied on to form the congregation at the ordinary services. Moreover,

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it is not an ungrateful work to point out to them the way to the synagogue. In France, as no doubt in all Europe, it is woman who is the guardian of the ideal—the apostle of religious sentiment. It is through her, whether as wife or mother, that families keep their respect for the religious traditions of the home. Now, the morning service on Sabbaths takes place too early for ladies to attend, in the large towns especially, where Jewish families sometimes live far from the synagogue. It was M. Zadoc Kahn, who when placed at the head of the large community of Paris, was the first among the Rabbis to understand that an innovation was necessary. This illustrious minister, whose talent is equalled by his intelligence, has always known, in a wonderful way, how, in the interest of Judaism, to turn to account "the deep sense of religion" which still fills the heart of Jews, in spite of their great indifference to religious observances. He instituted a solemn Minchah service on Saturday afternoons at a very convenient hour, and at this service a regular sermon was an important feature. The institution of this service has had an enormous success. The synagogue is literally crammed with people. In every large community the ministers of religion seized the opportunity and did not neglect to institute similar services, and to utilise them by preaching before a more or less numerous assembly.

The children, in their turn, have not been neglected. It has long been understood that in the case of religion especially the words are true: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength," a passage which may be illustrated by the no less expressive quotation from a profound modern thinker, "Give me the control over the education of the children, and I will transform the world." As early as 1841 the consistory of Paris had decided that henceforth there should be twice a year (on Passover and on the Feast of Tabernacles) a religious confirmation for both sexes. In 1852 the ceremony of Initiation was limited to one occasion annually (the Thursday after

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Pentecost). Some difficulty was experienced in establishing this custom, but it has now fully entered into the religious life wherever there was a nucleus of a community.

This religious Initiation, which is now-a-days celebrated with much solemnity, is, as it were, the consummation of the religious instruction of children. Boys of thirteen years and girls of twelve are invited to pass, on a day fixed by the Rabbis, an examination for admission to the ceremony of Initiation. The examination comprises Hebrew reading, translation of the principal prayers, sacred history, and the catechism. The children who successfully pass through this ordeal are summoned to the synagogue on the first Thursday after Pentecost. The boys generally wear black, and the girls always wear white. In Paris every parent who applies to the Benevolent Society is granted sufficient to defray the cost of these costumes, and seats are reserved for the parents at the ceremony in the synagogue. The details of the ceremony vary according to the different communities, but everywhere it comprises the chanting of various passages of the Liturgy, the recital by the children of the prayer, "Hear, O Israel," the Ten Commandments, the thirteen creeds in an abbreviated form, and, most important of all, there is an address by the spiritual chief. This "Initiation" reminds one very closely of the Catholic ceremony of "First Communion." The similarity holds good even to the dress of the little girls. Whatever may be its origin, it has ended by receiving everywhere a hearty welcome. Its usefulness was so readily perceived that the Rabbis, who were most strongly opposed to any innovation, have accepted it, in spite of its odour of Christianity, and have put it into practice without hesitation.

We have seen that this modern ceremony applies both to boys and girls. But, in the case of boys, it is celebrated without prejudice to the ancient ceremony of Barmitzvah, which it ought to precede. Besides, every lad, if he has

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not taken part in the ceremony of Initiation, is bound, before being admitted to the ceremony of Barmitzvah, to undergo an examination on the same subjects as for the examination which precedes the confirmation. It should be added that parents seldom allow their sons to dispense with the Barmitzvah function. Although everybody knows that this is not one of the fundamental doctrines of Judaism, it is generally kept even by the most unobservant families, in order to leave to their children the memory of the celebration of the Barmitzvah, which has a more essentially Jewish stamp than the new Initiation, and reminds them more eloquently of their origin.

In the Consistorial Assembly (October, 1841), in which the Initiation was established at Paris, it was intended to establish immediately "free public religious and moral instruction," to prepare the children for Initiation; but at this period there was not in Paris, besides the Chief Rabbi of France, more than a single Rabbi, and he could not be expected to undertake, in addition to his ordinary occupation, the duty of giving religious instruction to children. It was M. Munk and M. Albert Cohn—the one a wealthy scholar and the other a very learned man—who placed their time and goodwill at the disposal of the Consistory and offered to accept this task twice a week for the boys, and twice a week for the girls.

At present these courses are carried on in Paris, as in the communities of the Provinces, by Rabbis who twice a week assemble the children in the synagogue, and give them the necessary instruction respecting the observances of Judaism with its dogmas and ethics.

Lastly, to all secondary schools at which pupils are boarded, and which are subsidised by the State, there is appointed a State-Chaplain for every religion. The Jewish chaplain, who is a Rabbi, accordingly gives, in regular courses, religious instruction to every child who desires to be present at his classes; and it may be said that

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the pupils of high schools and colleges rarely withdraw themselves from these optional studies.

As regards schools of higher instruction and schools of primary instruction, they do not provide religious training. This would, indeed, be quite superfluous, since the former only contain pupils past the age of childhood, and the latter never possess a boarding-house.

As in the case of preaching, so in the case of religious instruction, the Rabbi enjoys absolute freedom, and need never be afraid of the interference of his spiritual superiors in his system of teaching religion and morality. There are, nevertheless, some religious works—catechisms, sacred histories, translated prayer-books, translations from the Bible, moral books—approved by the Chief Rabbi of the Central Consistory, which are ordinarily what may be called the official guides for Rabbis to follow.

Of catechisms we possess some few more or less complete. The principal ones, which are most frequently used, are those of Chief Rabbi Ulmann and M. Mayer. They all contain substantially the same elements under the form of questions and answers. We quote the titles of the chapters of one of them, and *ab uno disce omnes*:—"Religion," "The Holy Books," "Thirteen Creeds," "Israel's Mission," "Revelation of Sinai," "Duties toward God," "External Duties," "Feasts," "Fasts," "Principal Prohibitions," "Sin and Repentance," "Duties towards our Neighbours," "Jealousy," "Lying," "Slander," "Charity," "Patriotism," "Duties towards Parents," "Man's Duty to Himself," "Laws regarding Animals and Inanimate Objects," "Jewish Calendar."

The sacred histories are sufficiently numerous. Some are abridgments like those of M. Lévy Isaac and M. Mayer; others are more modern and superior to the former, such as that of M. Ledrain. We do not mention the work of M. Renan, which is rather a history of Israel, in which a scientific method is qualified by the play of the imagination, and thus renders it unsuited for the use of

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children. We are not equally deficient in good translations of the prayers. The translations of the Prayer Book by M. Anspach, by M. Durlacher, and by M. Bloch, with the Piyutim still used, leave nothing to be desired. To this series there must still be added the "Prayers of a Jewish Heart," containing in French, without the Hebrew text, the translation of the prayers for the whole year. This excellent book is the work of M. Aron, Chief Rabbi of Strasburg.

We possess several translations of the Bible. We may make special mention of the complete translation of the Bible by M. Cahen, and the translation of the Pentateuch by M. Wogue, Professor of Biblical Exegesis at the Seminary. The former shows that its author was thoroughly acquainted with the progress of modern science, and the other is a *chef d'œuvre* of knowledge and erudition.

As regards religious reading-books, we possess a small number, like "The First-Fruits," by M. E. Lambert, the "Holy Seeds," by the same author; "The Mornings of the Sabbath," by M. G. Neil: the "Ethics of Judaism," by M A. Weill; "Jewish Recreations," by M. Lévy Isaac, etc. In fact, our religious literature comprises only a very limited number of works, and most of these are formal treatises. The dearth of these works in France is easily explained: first, as has been seen above, the Jews in France are very few, and then it must be confessed, for this is the true reason, religious works are not read in France, and among the Jews it is only in the libraries of the Rabbis that works of this nature find a hospitable corner.

There are published in France—a large number for so limited a public—three Jewish journals, viz.:—*L'Univers* (Paris), *Les Archives Israélites* (Paris), and *La Famille de Jacob* (Avignon). We do not think we are exaggerating when we say that a large number of their subscribers must come from abroad. *La Revue des Etudes Juives*, a scientific review, which does the greatest honour to Judaism, has, on

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the contrary, met with an excellent reception. I do not say that all the subscribers read it, but it is something, at any rate, that a publication of this kind, which is addressed more to the learned than to amateurs, has met with such great sympathy, and with all the support that is necessary for it.

In speaking of the institution of the religious Initiation, we have been led by the connection of these two subjects to speak also of the religious publications in France. This was, perhaps, to a certain extent a digression, but it was a necessary digression. To return to our subject, let us point out another ceremony, the origin of which does not go back beyond the present period. This ceremony consists in bringing to the synagogue new-born children, and in presenting them to the minister, who gives them his blessing. This innovation had already been proposed in the course of the sitting of the Synod, and its appropriateness had been vigorously contested by certain members of that assembly. These members felt it repugnant to introduce into the Jewish religion a custom which recalled, as must be admitted, the Christian rite of baptism. It was nevertheless carried by a large majority in this assembly of Chief Rabbis, and the ceremony is performed at either of the Sabbath services, morning or afternoon.

In spite of the affirmative vote of the Synod, this custom has only recently become general. Now-a-days, in spite of, or rather by reason of, its odour of Christianity, it tends to become acclimatised in every community in France. We say by reason of its odour of Christianity, because the resemblance of this ceremony to the ceremony of baptism has, perhaps, contributed to its becoming, as it were, completely naturalised in higher Jewish social spheres. It is impossible for a weak minority, as the Jews are in France, not to feel the influence of Christianity—at least, in certain exterior details of worship. Not only do the large majority of Jews see no harm in borrowing from a religion—the daughter of Judaism, and no less moral than her parent

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—a beautiful and imposing ceremony, fertile in generous emotions and in salutary memorials; but it may be said that the very resemblance to the ceremonies of Christian ritual is generally an excellent recommendation in France for every innovation. Jews are so closely blended with Christians, they are so wedded to their manners and ideas, that where it is possible, and most often in a quite unconscious fashion, the Jews of their own accord bring into their religious life customs which they are used to see observed at every moment around them. The religious Initiation for young girls, especially as they are clad in white, surely reminds us of the First Communion; and can it be denied that it owes a part of its success to this analogy? The collection that takes place at marriage ceremonies, performed by a young girl on the arm of a young man, is again a copy of the collection in churches. The custom which for some years has been establishing itself in the heart of every community, especially in the provinces, to summon the Rabbi to the bedside of the dying, is but an importation from Christianity, where the presence of the priest is necessary to the welfare of the soul of the dying. The covering of coffins with flowers and garlands, the hangings at the entry of the mortuary, and all the luxury of the hearse, are equally proofs of the incursion into the domain of Judaism of the customs of other creeds. And, lastly, we have a striking example of the same process when, in that very assembly to which we have often referred, and which was entirely composed of Rabbis, these Rabbis adopted for their official dress the dress of the Catholic priest, the only difference being in the white colour of the band.

Besides the new customs introduced into the Jewish ritual, there is one—viz., the employment of the organ in the temple—which was the object of lively debate during the Synod, and for several years afterwards. This assembly of Rabbis, deeply embarrassed, was driven, as it were, in one direction by the demands of those who deemed the accompaniment of the organ permissible and desirable,

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and in the other direction by the protests of those who declared it to be contrary to religious ordinances. It found a way of satisfying the two parties, by proclaiming that the organ accompaniment was lawful from a religious point of view, but gave to the respective Rabbis, in conjunction with their managing board, the option of allowing or refusing the introduction of the organ into the synagogue. The community of Paris soon had its organ in the synagogue on all solemn occasions, and all the large communities immediately followed her example. Now-a-days there is not a community in France where the penetrating tones of this instrument are not heard every Sabbath. In France, as we have already seen, hesitation, and even discussion, die out before the sight of an imposing service. Rabbis and committees are always sure beforehand of absolution, and still more of approval from the public, provided the worship be attractive, the ceremonies moving and full of pious dignity.

There is another ceremony which is now so generally practised as to almost constitute a new institution—the ancient הזכרת נשמות, or prayer in memory of the dead, which occupies now-a-days a place of honour in the Atonement service at the beginning of Minchah. The two doors of the ark are opened, and the Rabbi begins by a meditation in French, followed generally by a prayer also in French. Then he recites the passage טוב שם משמן טוב and ends by calling over the names of those members of the community who have died in the course of the year. The institution of the ceremony under this form is due to Chief Rabbi Isidore, whose "meditation" has been generally adopted by the other Rabbis. We quote this meditation, and reproduce it because of its universal use in France:—

"Seigneur! Toi qui dispenses la vie et la mort, tu as tiré le monde du néant, tu as créé l'homme, tu l'as formé à ton image et lui as dit : tu seras le maître de l'ouvrage de mes mains. Tu lui as donné l'intelligence, cette étincelle divine, pour qu'il reconnaisse ta puissance et ta grandeur, et il a plu à ta sagesse d'assigner une borne à chaque créature

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pour entrer dans la vie et pour aller à la mort, comme la plante, comme le ver de terre, l'homme disparaît et descend dans la tombe.

"Mais ce qui a été créé et formé par toi ne peut pas devenir la proie de la destruction. Ce qui est sorti de sa puissante main ne peut pas se perdre, ne peut être anéanti sans retour. Tout meurt pour revivre ; tu ne peux pas, toi qui crées et ne détruis pas, tu ne peux pas détruire cette âme qui est en nous et qui nous vient de toi. Non, notre âme ne meurt pas, elle remonte vers toi, la source d'où elle est venue et notre enveloppe terrestre qui sort de la poussière redevient de la poussière.

"Dans cette poussière reposent toutes les générations qui nous ont précédés, là aussi reposent nos parents, nos amis, tous ceux que nous avons aimés. Leur corps est là, renfermé dans la tombe, mais leur esprit est devant toi, ô Seigneur Tout-Puissant, et nous aussi, quand notre heure sonnera, notre corps s'unira à leur corps et notre esprit ira t'adorer, au pied de ton trône éternel.

"O Dieu, donne-nous à tous la force d'attendre tranquillement le moment qui nous rappelle vers toi et quand l'heure fixée par ta sagesse sera arrivée sois encore avec nous et laisse-nous participer aux félicités que tu réserves aux justes !

"Nous rappelons devant toi le souvenir de nos parents qui ne sont plus, nous pensons en ce moment surtout aux sacrifices qu'ils se sont imposés pour nous et à la perte cruelle que leur mort nous a fait éprouver.

"Nous rappelons devant toi le souvenir de ceux dont la vie a été consacrée au bien, le souvenir des hommes pieux, justes, éclairés, qui ont défendu la cause israélite, la cause de la vertu, de l'humanité.

"Exauce, ô mon Dieu, les vœux que nous formons pour leur béatitude éternelle et réalise les espérances qu'ils ont nourries pour leurs familles et pour nous, au moment de quitter la terre ! Accorde-leur la récompense que tu réserves aux justes.

"Puissent leurs regards descendre sur nous. Puissent-ils nous bénir comme tu l'as promis à ceux qui espèrent en ta grâce et en ta miséricorde. *Amen!*"

This ceremony has now acquired exceptional importance. It is received every year by the faithful with deep emotion, due to the touching character of the ceremony in itself, to the solemnity of the Day of Atonement, and also to the need for some outlet to sentimentality which, thanks to the void and unrest which modern scepticism leaves in the heart, evidences itself more clearly every day.

We have not given in the above the whole list of inno-

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vations of which we have to speak. It is necessary to mention that everywhere in France, at the initiative of M. Zadoc Kahn, the Rabbis recite in the temple a prayer in French on the Friday evening before the Kiddush, and another prayer on the next morning, also in French, when the Law is taken out of the Ark.

To the number of novelties introduced into the religious service, we must further add a kind of Ketubah in French, composed by M. Zadoc Kahn, and adopted or imitated by the generality of French Rabbis. The text is as follows :—

"Aujourd'hui jour du mois de de l'année de la création du monde, les époux et se sont présentés devant nous à l'effet d'obtenir la consécration religieuse, la bénédiction de Dieu.

"En présence de Dieu et dans le Temple consacré à son culte, après la récitation des prières d'usage et l'accomplissement des formalités traditionnelles ; après avoir indiqué aux deux époux les devoirs qu'ils auront à remplir dans leur vie nouvelle ; après les avoir bénis au nom de la Religion et appelé sur eux les faveurs du ciel, nous les déclarons unis par les liens du mariage suivant la loi de Moïse et d'Israël."

In this place should also be mentioned a French prayer, composed by Chief Rabbi Isidore for use at the Burial Service. This prayer, printed among the other prayers read on these occasions, is an integral portion of the Burial Service, and runs as follows :—

"Dieu de bonté et de miséricorde, toi qui tiens entre tes mains l'âme des vivants et le souffle de tout mortel, nous venons rappeler devant toi le souvenir de notre frère (notre sœur).....et recommander à ta clémence et à ta miséricorde infinie son âme qui a quitté le monde pour aller dans le monde meilleur.

"Exauce les prières que nous t'adressons pour le salut de cette âme, ouvre-lui les portes du ciel, accueille-la avec amour et donne-lui une place au pied de ton trône éternel.

"En faveur de ton saint nom, pardonne à notre frère (sœur) les fautes qu'il (elle) peut avoir commises. "Quel est le mortel, a dit le prophète, qui fait toujours le bien et ne pêche jamais?" Accepte comme un sacrifice d'expiation tout ce qu'il (elle) a souffert ici-bas et tiens-lui compte de ses bonnes actions et de ses bonnes intentions. Accorde-lui les récompenses que tu réserves aux justes et aux pieux, à tous ceux qui confessent et qui adorent ton nom.

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"Console, ô mon Dieu, ceux que cette mort plonge dans l'affliction es doucis leur amertume ; rends-leur le calme et la paix, et que le souvenir du défunt (de la défunte) soit toujours pour eux et pour nous un objet de bénédictions.

"Que sa sortie de ce monde et son entrée dans le royaume céleste soient bénies devant toi, ô notre Dieu et notre Père. *Amen!*"

We possess quite a series of special prayers and meditations composed, some by M. Isidore, and some by M. Zadoc Kahn, and others again by M. Wogue, to be recited at the graves of the departed. In reforming the ritual, some prayers have been suppressed without others being inserted in their place, and, on the other hand, several additions have been made.

Under the head of suppressions, the Piyutim must be mentioned. The introduction into the synagogue of the organ and choirs necessarily lengthened the services, and a compensating abridgement had to be effected. Little by little the longest Piyutim were, in fact, withdrawn from the ritual; and soon, Paris first, and afterwards other communities, passed the limits fixed by the Synod, which had given permissive right to omit the less satisfactory of these poems. The process of clearance was ruthlessly carried on in this forest of Piyutim, which had been for centuries the joy of our ancestors, and a true delight for pious hearts. Now-a-days the Piyutim are almost or quite eliminated from all services other than those of New Year, and the Day of Atonement. Moreover, on these two solemn days the number of Piyutim has been conspicuously reduced. There has appeared recently in Paris a Prayer-book with translations for the various festivals in the year. This book, as regards the Piyutim, is composed on the principle we have just pointed out, and it is likely to become the official Prayer-book of all the French communities.

The prayers for week-days and Sabbaths have also been occasionally modified. Thus the long supplication beginning with והוא רחום, and read formerly on Mondays and Thursdays in the morning service; and,

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also במה מדליקין, have shared the fate of the Piyutim. The שיר היחוד and the אנעים זמירות have not been more fortunate. The במה מדליקין, and יקום פורקן, and אין כאלהינו, have not found more favour. The מוסף is read only aloud, and lastly, the שיר המעלות in winter and the פרקי אבות in summer have not escaped. Other prayers have not been removed, but paraphrased or translated into French. A few words ought to be said about the prayer for the Government and our native country, inasmuch as it has passed through various vicissitudes before reaching its modern shape.

Formerly in France, as elsewhere, the old הנותן תשועה למלכים was read in every synagogue during the morning service. The passage which prayed that the head of the State should have the glory of crushing his enemies under his feet, of coming out victorious from all his enterprises, harmonised admirably with the ambitious dreams and bold enterprises of the first Bonaparte. Nevertheless, it was during his reign that הנותן תשועה was replaced by a new prayer, commonly called אלהים חיים, from the first two words of the prayer. The reason why it had become necessary to compose a new prayer was that, in 1808, the Jewish ritual had just been officially organised. Now the emperor understood that his numerous victories and colossal ambition were celebrated in every house of prayer with the most vehement enthusiasm. The הנותן תשועה in plain prose did not lend itself to choral accompaniment. It was not a Te Deum sufficiently pompous for the greatness of the emperor, or for the gratitude and ardent loyalty of the Jews. It was due to the talent of the celebrated Abraham Cologna, the first of the three Chief Rabbis, who was then a member of the Central Consistory, that a prayer was composed more in conformity with the new requirements.

The new prayer was, in fact, a poetic hymn in rhymed verse. It was written in a stately style, adapted to the accompaniment of a choir, which ought, doubtless, to respond

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Amen, after each distich. Substantially this prayer, substituted for the old one, was nothing else than a reproduction in a poetic shape of the wishes for glory, dominion and victory contained in the first prayer. One thing, however, is omitted in the work of Cologna, no doubt intentionally, viz., the entreaty to God to incline the heart of the king and his counsellors to have pity on the unhappy fate of the Jews, and to cause the time of deliverance of Zion to draw near. This passage was no longer appropriate in a prayer composed after the emancipation of the Jews. They had already been admitted into the heart of the great French family, and henceforth had a native country of their own. Accordingly, to ask for pity from men had become superfluous in the eyes of the Jews, and to pray for the restoration of Zion might have appeared suspicious to the emperor.

This prayer was still the national official prayer when the Synod held its meeting. This assembly voted that it should be replaced by a French prayer, but for the day of the national fête alone. In the ordinary Saturday services the אלהים חיים was always read. It was only some years afterwards that Chief Rabbi Isidore replaced it definitely and officially by a French prayer, which he made obligatory for every community in France. This prayer is still said in every French temple, and corresponds too well with modern feelings and ideas for any further change to be necessary. We quote this prayer, and print it together with its Hebrew original. As will be seen, M. Isidore has often departed from the Hebrew text. He has taken care to adapt to the Republic all the prayers which were suitable under the imperial regime, and to cut out those which could not be so adapted.

אלהים חיים ומלך עולם המגביהי לשבת · המשפילי לראות
בשמים ובארץ · בידך כח וגבורה לגדל ולחזק לכל · אשר מפיך
מלכים ימלוכו ומידך למו מטה עז שבט מישור לנחל לאמים ·
השקיפה ממעון קדשך וברך ונצור ושמור אדוננו · · · · אמן ·

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ברכות שמים מעל תצו ארו יאריך ימים ושנות חיים על ממלכתו אמן · כאשון בת עין תנצרהו · עטרת תפארת נצח תמגנהו אמן · שלח אורך ואמתך המה ינחוהו · חסד ואמת תמיד יצרוהו אמן · מאד מאד ירום אדוננו ונשא וגבה · עם כל בני משפחתו הנשגבה אמן · בארצנו רב שלום יפרח · ויושביה לעד ישכנו לבטח אמן · יהיו לרצון אמרי פינו והגיון לבנו · לפניך ה׳ צורנו וגואלנו אמן :

"Dieu, Eternel, maître de l'Univers ! Du haut de ton trône tu inclines les regards de ta Providence vers les cieux et la terre ; la force et la puissance t'appartiennent ; par toi tout s'agrandit, tout s'affermit ; de ta demeure sainte, ô Seigneur, bénis et protège la République française et le peuple français. *Amen.*

"Accorde à notre pays bien-aimé la sécurité, et le bonheur et qu'il jouisse toujours d'une paix profonde. *Amen.*

"Que par le travail, l'instruction et la concorde, la France prospère et conserve toujours son rang glorieux parmi les nations. *Amen.*

"Que les rayons de ta lumière éclairent et guident ceux qui sont à la tête de l'Etat, que ta miséricorde et ta grâce soient leur bouclier. *Amen.*

"Accueille favorablement nos vœux, que les paroles de notre bouche et les sentiments de notre cœur trouvent grâce devant toi, ô Eternel, notre créateur et notre libérateur."

Other prayers also have been replaced by a French translation more or less free. Thus, at the taking of the Law out of the Ark, the prayer commencing with רבונו של עולם has, in most communities which have a Rabbi, been replaced by a French paraphrase.

In the same way, the benediction called מי שברך, which the Rabbi used to read aloud before the return of the Law to the Ark, is replaced in those communities where there is a Rabbi by an equivalent French benediction. As regards several French prayers which are added to the service, or which are mere translations of the ordinary Hebrew prayers, we must be careful to state that they are only added or translated where there is a Rabbi to read them. We have in fact seen above that the Chazan has neither the right nor the capacity to compose a French prayer, or to read it with appropriate expression.

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The above are the principal reforms which the ritual has undergone. These changes have been introduced little by little in the most peaceable manner possible without a single objection being raised. They are, moreover, very mild, and scarcely deserve the ambitious name of Reforms. People may be inclined to smile when they think that these light touches were able, some years ago, to raise, and can still raise, so many angry feelings. This appears the more astonishing when the Rabbi is actually the absolute master of the whole collection of prayers and ceremonies of the ritual, and when no one would think of offering the slightest objection against anything which he should deem it expedient to do, or not to do.

III.

We have finished with the religious and liturgical sections of our paper, though we by no means pretend that our account is complete. Our object was simply to give to those who do not know French Judaism an approximate idea of the condition of its religious spirit, its ritual, its nature, and its tendencies. We must now attempt a similar work with regard to its philanthropy. This is merely another aspect of Judaism, which places charity among religious duties.

Philanthropy, which is, and has always been, a characteristic virtue of Jews, is exercised to an extraordinary degree among the Jews of France. We do not refer to the poor-boxes which have been established in every Jewish community from time immemorial for the relief of poor travellers and the necessitous families of the locality. It is an ancient Jewish institution—a sacred tradition. A society for administering charity, under some name or other, has always been established at the same time as the community itself. But as soon as this community has increased to a hundred families, we are sure to find by the side of these inevitable committees the names of other institutions, such as the Society for Helping the Sick, Lying-in Charities,

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Society of Arts and Handicrafts, Society of Levayat Metim (Burial), an Orphan Asylum, Almshouses, and Hospitals for the Afflicted, etc., etc. We are certainly giving only an insignificant portion of the names of these associations which exist and prosper in the communities, to the great relief of human misery under all its forms. We need scarcely say that it is in Paris that charity and generous philanthropy have found their chief expression, and we shall accordingly pass in review its principal philanthropic institutions. In Paris the amount of misery is very great; the philanthropic institutions have increased in number to keep pace with growing needs. We must confine our remarks to the chief institutions, because a volume would be necessary to give a complete account.

The "Comité de Bienfaisance" of Paris must have the honour of priority. It is the first in importance, as well as the first in date, among all the benevolent institutions. Further, it is in some way the source from which the other institutions, like so many different ramifications, have taken their origin, and it still contributes, sometimes in a large degree, to their daily support. The association dates from 1819, and then bore the name of "Comité Consistorial de Secours et d'Encouragement." The members of this society took upon themselves the task of caring for poor invalids, of securing the necessary attendance (*minyan*) at funerals and at prayers morning and evening, of watching by the dead, of preparing them for interment, and digging their graves. This organisation was only temporary, but many years had to elapse before any change was made in it. Towards 1852, under the fertile impulse of the ever-memorable Albert Cohn, this society was considerably developed, and changed its name, as well as its programme, and embraced in its charitable work every form of suffering and infirmity. Henceforth it was called by the short title of "Comité de Bienfaisance," and became a species of public help, from the midst of which radiated almost without limit an extraordinary

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number of other philanthropic institutions. It was a store-house, by means of which the needy of all sorts and conditions were relieved. It disburses annually more than 500,000 francs. We cannot mention all the forms that the charity of this association assumes, but will confine ourselves to quoting its chief services and creations, viz, regular monthly assistance to the poor on the books of the institution; temporary assistance to the poor not on the books; assisting foreigners to return to their native country; special distributions on religious feasts; distribution of coal, etc., in winter; soup kitchens, serving on an average about 300,000 portions per annum; helping women during their confinement; the annual distribution of hot food and clothes to more than 200 children in the elementary schools; distribution of clothes to more than 200 poor children at their religious Initiation; the loan office for advancing up to 100 francs to small tradesmen in distress; looking after children in receipt of relief, but not admitted into orphanages, and placing them in families where they are received for a sum agreed upon; the work of housing a certain number of poor widows and families; the provision for a small annual payment of the right to a grave in the Jewish cemetery; and, lastly, the hospitals, refuges, orphanages, and similar institutions, of which we shall treat with some particularity, because they are institutions which have become very important, so that each necessitates the possession of special establishments.

One of the most ancient foundations of the community of Paris, or rather of the Benevolent Society, is that of the Almshouses. The Society began in 1809 by giving to these invalids such assistance as enabled them to be attended to in their own homes, or in the houses of other Jews. After many futile efforts, the present hospital was established in 1852, and is due to the munificence of Baron James de Rothschild. The building, situate at 76, Rue Piepus, and belonging by deed of gift to the Consistory of

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Paris, is supported by the donations of numerous contributors, and a large annual subvention from the Benevolent Society. It has in later times been greatly enlarged, and is no longer a single hospital, but a combination, in one body, of several connected hospitals, intended to receive the adult sick, children, incurables, and old people, whose infirmities arise from age. Further special halls have recently been organised for lying-in women and for nurses, and isolated rooms for contagious diseases.

The hospital is situated in a healthy, airy, quiet quarter. It is surrounded by handsome gardens which belong to the hospital, and contain large promenades for the use of convalescents. In these hospitals there are no male attendants, but all the nurses are women—an excellent thing, since, as is well known, a woman is better for this duty than a man; she is more tender towards, and at the same time has more control over, an invalid. The institution receives with the same benevolence the poor unfortunate people, who, under the pretext of illness come and ask for peace and quiet, and the recovery of their strength; and welcomes also those unhappy victims, who, attacked with pitiless disease, are doomed to long suffering, and are weary unto death. This hospital supports them for months and years; for while in other hospitals of the town old cases are often obliged to make room for new ones, the Jewish hospital (it is worth while to say this pointedly) only discharges its patients when they are either cured or dead—cured, we say, and not merely convalescent.

The management of the institution is in itself gentle and paternal, as the director, and his army of attendants following his example, necessarily are. We give some particulars which show to what a degree anxious care is displayed on behalf of those who seek their benevolent hospitality. As the patients for the most part belong to poor families, the funds of the establishment pay, in case of death, all the expenses of the funeral. Moreover, there is

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never any autopsy over the bodies of those who die int he hospital. If the patient is cured, he is not roughly cast from an easy life, free from anxiety, into the rough struggles of daily life. There are in the hospital two special foundations, two relieving offices, one for persons who have stayed less than a fortnight at the hospital, and the other for persons whose stay has exceeded two weeks. These last receive assistance to the amount of as much as a hundred francs.

The services which this hospital renders daily may be appreciated by the fact that from its foundation down to the present day it has admitted nearly forty thousand patients. In this total is not included the considerable number of patients who come every morning at the hour of consultation fixed by the hospital doctors. The medicines prescribed are furnished gratuitously by the dispensary of the hospital.

The portion devoted to afflicted children is in the same building as that devoted to the adult invalids. The children are received at any age. There is a special department for the accouchement of women. Strong and healthy wet-nurses are put at the disposal of those children whose premature sufferings have brought them to the hospital. Everything in this institution is organised in such a manner that these little creatures obtain there, in addition to medical treatment, the caresses and joys of which children of their tender years have so much need. Many children, too, are attacked with maladies and infirmities against which medical science struggles in vain if they cannot borrow certain of the powers of nature. These natural aids are strengthening sea-breezes, and the life-giving atmosphere of the sea-shore. Accordingly, at Berck-sur-Mer a branch of this children's hospital has been erected, an enormous model establishment which receives all that sad, suffering legion, stricken at the dawn of life by maladies and diseases.

Let us return now to the hospital of the Rue Piepus,

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which we left for a while. The home for incurables (built in 1877) is separated by a vast garden from the hospital of the adults and children. The unfortunate beings to whom it opens its doors are the deformed, and those afflicted with anchylosis and paralysis, some of whom are driven about in carriages, while others drag themselves along on crutches. This class, to whom human science can bring no cure or relief, is at all events sheltered from the additional terrors of the struggle for existence.

A little further lies the Asylum for the Aged, which is a model of its kind. Every old man has his own room, and he is master of it; he can take refuge in it, or leave it whenever he pleases. The rooms are comfortable, and the furniture in them is simple, but complete. Every room is supplied with an electric bell, to summon, in case of need, the assistance of the staff. In addition to this there are large gardens furnished with seats, gravelled drives where these peaceable pensioners can imbibe the air and sunshine, large covered promenades, spacious courtyards warmed in winter, where they take their exercise in bad weather; rooms for smoking and conversation, where, though cards are forbidden, the old men are allowed to throw dice and play dominoes, and there is provided a covered refreshment room almost luxurious; in short, everything is arranged in such a way that many a veteran who ends his days in this peaceful retreat finds there pleasures which he had never tasted before.

This retreat for the old receives a large number of boarders, but there was still room for another institution for inmates of a different class, viz., old people without family or relations, not sufficiently rich to live on their own incomes, nor sufficiently poor to ask for gratuitous relief. This house, the necessity for which made itself felt, has been erected recently, but only for women. M. Moyse Léon, a generous and active man, founded at the gates of Paris and near the Bois, an establishment capable of receiving a large number of aged women. The expense of

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the acquisition of the land was covered partly by the personal sacrifices of M. Léon, and partly by the subscriptions he collected. To be a pensioner in this house, every woman pays the sum of six hundred francs a year. They remain there until the end of their lives, attended with all the care and solicitude required at their age.

It is certainly in accordance with the traditional charity of Jews to relieve the suffering and soften the wretchedness of old age; but its actions ought not to be confined to this, nor are they so confined in France. From 1809, the Benevolent Society had thought of such unhappy young people as are cruelly tried before they are able fully to appreciate what they suffer. But the work had to be begun with very modest means. A commencement was made by entrusting a five-year old orphan to a family, which, with the help of a payment, undertook to keep him for seven years, and to have him taught a useful profession. This system of placing orphans in families was continued until the time when the number of orphans for whom the committee had to find a place having become too large, and the Society having become richer, they decided to provide a special establishment for orphans. A gift of four hundred thousand francs offered by the Rothschild family enabled them, without delay, to acquire a large site in the Rue des Rosiers. This was in 1857. Ten years later this house became too small in its turn, and many applications had to be rejected through sad necessity. Again, the generosity of a member of the Rothschild family, Baroness Salomon, came to the rescue, and a large piece of land in Rue Lamblardie was acquired.

The Orphanage erected on this ground is sumptuous, and answers current needs. It contains at present about fifty children of both sexes. They are admitted from four years old, and it is needless to say that their intellectual and moral education is well and lovingly looked after. The boys are sent to higher schools or are apprenticed, according to the capacity they display; the girls are retained in

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the homes until suitable employment is found for them as servants or governesses.

A school for apprentices exists in Paris, and is called "Ecole de Travail." Its object is to teach boys some handicraft that will enable them to gain an honest living. The commencement of this school was something like that of the Orphanage. The Benevolent Society began by placing some children with certain patrons who took upon themselves the task of providing them with material support, and also of teaching them a trade. Later on the necessity was felt of having a boarding-house whence the young apprentices, after being fed, lodged and clothed, might proceed to their daily work at the shops, etc., of their employers, and then attend in the evening, after supper, a class opened specially for them. In 1869, the wish of the committee to meet this necessity was realised under modest conditions. A house was bought, and was immediately occupied by a dozen pupils. The place soon became too small, and the school was established in the house which the orphanage had just left. It contains now a hundred, placed out among different employers, mostly Jews. In the morning they go forth to their work, and in the evening they return and find food, light and warmth, and, in the society of their companions, something like the joys of home. When they leave this establishment, they are powerfully armed for the struggle of life by a perfect knowledge of the trade they have chosen, and by the intellectual and moral education they have acquired.

The "Ecole de Travail" for girls has been in operation since 1872, and its object is similar to that of the boys' school. It is to a certain extent the special property of the Bischoffsheim family. The institution is established in a large building erected for the special purpose. Girls here receive a technical education. The house contains at present fifty pupils, who will become either governesses or shop-girls or will work at handicrafts; but whatever may

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be the career they choose, they all receive lessons in sewing, dancing singing, music, English, and also in gymnastics. Intending governesses study all the branches on which they will be examined when they enter for their diploma: those who intend to learn trades are under the superintendence of instructors, who come from outside workshops; intending business-women learn book-keeping and accounts, and practise commercial correspondence.

We have just seen charity taking possession of orphans, and giving them a home; we have seen charity also occupied with adults, and giving them a means of livelihood, but we have not yet seen it struggling against vice, attempting to prevent its development or birth by snatching away its victims, or those who are likely to become so. I desire to speak of those boys and girls who, at an age when the human mind is accessible to every influence, have before their eyes only pernicious examples, and have no moral guidance from parents, or any one else. How many of these beings, corrupted before they could be even aware of it, have descended later on down every step in the ladder of degradation, when, perhaps, all that would have been required to save these poor creatures, and to have slackened or even have stopped their progress on the path of evil, was only a little generous pity? These children, who are said to be morally lost, are at least as worthy of the care and kindness of philanthropists as children who have merely lost their father or mother. To look after this class of children, to make them moral, and to teach them the way of obtaining an honest livelihood by the fruit of their labour, amounts to rescuing them beforehand from evil; or if they are already enrolled in its ranks, it is like saving them from destruction. We possess, indeed, two houses, called "Houses of Refuge for Young Jews," one at Neuilly, at the gates of Paris, for young girls, and the other at Sceaux, about ten miles from Paris, for boys.

The refuge for girls was established earlier than that for

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boys, for in every work of benevolence people are rightly induced to think of woman first. Her moral life is more exposed to danger, and for her a false step, if once made, is irreparable. The house was opened in 1856, at Romainville, under the auspices of Madame Coralie Cahen, a lady of cultured mind and incomparable heart. The beginning, as usual, was very humble. Only a small number of children could be admitted—those who had been caught in the meshes of the law, and who were destined for the House of Correction. The refuge was moved later on to Neuilly, but the accommodation was still insufficient to meet the demands. There were also many more children, who, though deprived of every controlling influence, had still an irreproachable past; it was, however, necessary, by opening to them the gates of the refuge, at any cost to prevent them from rolling in the mire. Application was made to some noble-minded people, who recognised the importance of the mission undertaken by the Refuge, and answered the application with generous gifts. The Benevolent Society, in its turn, made great sacrifices, and voted a considerable subvention. Lastly, M. Zadoc Kahn, by his sermons and by other steps, caused large sums of money to pour in. Thanks to all this generosity and all these combined efforts, an institution of vast dimensions, comfortably arranged, healthily and wisely organised, is now erected at Neuilly, in the heart of a delightful neighbourhood. This refuge shelters at present more than a hundred inmates, who there obtain a mother's careful guidance.

The age of the inmates varies from five to eighteen. The hours are wisely divided between work, study, and recreation, which are necessary to keep body and mind in sound health. When they leave the Refuge, these girls are sure to know how to earn their bread honestly, and take away with them a love and knowledge of work, and principles of order and economy.

Although the Refuge for girls has been in operation for several years, the Refuge for boys is only one year old.

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On the other hand, when once the creation of the boys' Refuge had been decided on, its execution was prompt, and on a large scale. The successes obtained by the house at Neuilly had been so brilliant that the benevolent-minded were sure to attempt for the boys that which had succeeded so well for the girls. In proportion, as the house at Neuilly received a larger number of abandoned children, the prisons and docks of the courts were occupied by a smaller number of young women who were going astray. Now-a-days, there are no longer any; those who seemed destined to come sooner or later before the bar of justice, have been received by the house at Neuilly before they had time to make a slip. This result was so brilliant that it was inevitable that an establishment of the same kind should be created for boys. The matter was taken in hand by M. Zadoc Kahn; in other words, it became an immense success. In a very short space of time this minister collected a sum of 500,000 francs. After that a committee could be formed with confidence, and entrusted with the execution of the work to which they could with hopeful prospects apply themselves. Already the establishment contains a considerable number of inmates, and will probably develop after the style of the older institution at Neuilly.

The pupils of the Refuge are taught agriculture. The house, being situated in the open country, lends itself admirably to this work. The children, like those of the Refuge at Neuilly, receive a substantial primary education, which is useful for them, even when they are tillers of the ground.

Before finishing our list, necessarily incomplete, even for the community of Paris, we must give a passing notice to the numerous mutual benefit societies which live and prosper by the side of the large philanthropic institutions. In the single community of Paris forty of them can be enumerated, societies for men and societies for women, but we cannot find space even to enumerate them.

S. Debré,
Rabbin de Neuilly, Paris.

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